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ABSTRACT

A collection of papers, all by the author, looks at a variety of theories and theoretical approaches from linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics and their applications to the teaching of English as a second language. Two studies are also presented. Titles include: "Content Schemata and Second Language Learning"; "Textual Schemata and English Language Education"; "Reading Strategies in Second/Foreign Language Teaching"; "Linguistic Pragmatics and English Language Education"; "Foreigner Talk, Foreigner Register, and Teacher Talk"; "Communicative Competence in English: Teaching About Functions"; "Variations in Success in Acquiring a Second Language: Two Approaches"; "Developing Exercises for Reading Materials"; "Teaching Rhetorical Patterns and Transitions in College-Level English Composition Courses"; "Comprehension of Indirect Requests in English by East Asian Nonnative Speakers"; and "Preparation for and Results of a Short-Term Overseas Study Program in the United States." Contains a 359-item bibliography on reading and schema theory. (MSE)

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Theory and Application in English Language Teaching

S. Kathleen Kitao

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in
English Language Teaching

S. Kathleen Kitao

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Phone 03-3263-1641 Fax 03-3263-6174

Introduction

In this book, I look at various theories and theoretical approaches from linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. These theories have important implications for language teachers. In the first section, I look at various theories and how they can be applied to second/foreign language teaching, as well as some considerations related to making classroom materials. In the second section, I report on two studies, one on the comprehension of functions and one on Japanese students going overseas for a short-term stay and the effects on their language proficiency and their images of the United States.

Most of the papers in this book have been published in other publications, though many of them have been either expanded or updated for this book. The following is a list of citations for the original publications.

1. Content Schemata and Second Language Learning (1989)
   Updated from *Reading, Schema Theory and Second Language Learners*, Chapter 1
   ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 314 937
2. Textual Schemata and English Language Education (1990)
   Cross Currents, 17
3. Reading Strategies in Second/Foreign Language Teaching (1994)
   Doshisha Women's College Annual Reports of Studies, 45
4. Linguistic Pragmatics and English Language Education (1990)
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6. Communicative Competence in English: Teaching about Functions (1993)
   Doshisha Women's College Annual Reports of Studies, 44
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7. Variations in Success in Acquiring a Second Language: Two Approaches (1991)
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10. Comprehension of Indirect Requests by East Asian Non-Native Speakers (1987)
   Doshisha Women's College Annual Reports of Studies, 38
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   Bulletin of the Research Center, Doshisha Women's College, 10
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S. Kathleen Kitao, Ph.D.
Kyoto, Japan
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I. THEORY AND APPLICATION

1. Content Schemata and Second Language Learning

Abstract

Receptive skills such as reading and listening are traditionally considered passive skills. According to this traditional view, various kinds of lower-level information, such as letters, morphemes, and word meaning, are added together to arrive at higher-level information, such as sentence meaning and paragraph meaning. However, research in the reading process has indicated that the reader takes an active role in the process of reading and that higher-level information influences the comprehension of lower-level information. In this paper, I review those studies and discuss schema theory, a theory about the structure of background knowledge and how it contributes to the comprehension process. I also review research on the process of acquiring and comprehending lexical items, since schemata are believed to have an influence on these. In addition, I look at studies of reading comprehension of second/foreign language learners and discuss the impact that schema theory has on the teaching of reading to second/foreign language learners.

In looking at comprehension, whether reading or listening comprehension, the traditional assumption is that these are skills in which the reader/listener passively "takes in" what the writer/speaker has produced. However, in recent years, it has come to be recognized that what are traditionally referred to as passive skills do require the active participation of the comprehender. The reader/listener's background knowledge interacts with input for the reader/listener to arrive at comprehension. Starting with such theorists as Goodman (1967) and Smith (1971), the movement has been to include the reader in textual interpretations. This movement has not been restricted to psycholinguistics but is also reflected in counterparts in philosophy, psychology, communication, and literary criticism. *Schema theory* has been developed to help explain how readers/listeners interact with the text for comprehension.

In this paper, I discuss studies that have been done which indicate that a passive, unidirectional model of reading does not explain findings about comprehension. I look at schema theory, in particular content schemata, and discuss how schemata affect reading and vocabulary, particularly for nonnative speakers of English. I review studies that have been done on nonnative speakers and discuss schemata and reading in second language learners. Finally, I make recommendations on how what is known about schemata can be applied in the second language classroom.

Inadequacies of Traditional Concepts of Reading

Models of reading (e.g., Gough, 1972; LaBerge and Samuels, 1974) have been proposed which conceptualize reading as being a unidirectional process from the printed page into the mind of the reader. These models propose, basically, that reading is a process in which symbols are built up into words, words into sentences, and sentences into overall meaning. These models reflect traditional attitudes toward reading. This conceptualization treats reading as what is sometimes referred to as a *bottom-up process*, because the reader begins with the lowest level, features of symbols, from which the symbols are identified. Strings of symbols are then analyzed into morphological clusters, from which words are recognized, and then strings of words are analyzed into phrases and sentences. The reader thus works up from marks on a page through words and sentences to meaning (Thomas, 1980).

However, many studies of the reading process have produced results that would be impossible to explain in terms of such a unidirectional model. On the symbol level, there are a number of studies that have indicated that identification of letters is influenced by their semantic or syntactic context. For example, Nash-Weber (1975) showed that an ambiguous symbol (which, in isolation, could be identified as either "w" or "ev") would be identified according to the context of the sentence. Also, Reicher (1969) found that a letter is perceived more accurately when it is part of a word than when it is part of a string of unrelated letters. Even orthographic knowledge plays a role in letter identification. In a study reported by Rumelhart (1982), participants were presented with strings of letters, some of which had clusters of letters that were legal in English and some of which had illegal clusters. When asked to name the letters in the string, participants showed a tendency to transpose illegal clusters to make them legal, though they rarely transposed legal clusters to make them illegal. These studies and others indicate that identification of letters depends on higher level knowledge.

Further, perception of words is facilitated by their syntactic and semantic environments. Kolers (1970) analyzed substitution errors (errors in which an incorrect word is substituted for a correct one) made by adults in reading aloud. If the reading comprehension process in unidirectional, it would be expected that errors would be strongly influenced by visual similarity to the correct word. However, Kolers found that, in 70% of the cases, the substitution errors were the same part of speech as the correct word. (Eighteen percent would be expected by chance.)

In similar studies, Weber (1970) found first graders' reading errors fit grammatically with the text up to that point that in 90% of the cases, and Stevens and Rumelhart (1975) found that 98% of the substitution errors recognizable as words were grammatically correct in the sentence. Also, Meyer and Schvaneveldt (1971) found that participants identifying pairs of words could identify the second word faster if it was semantically related to the first word, (e.g., "nurse" was easier to identify if it followed "doctor" than if it followed "bread"). Thus, studies indicate that word recognition is also facilitated by higher level knowledge.

Lastly, sentence comprehension is facilitated by knowledge of semantics and by the context in which the sentence is found. Schank (1973) found that ambiguous sentences tended to be interpreted based on the reader's semantic knowledge (e.g., "I saw the Grand Canyon flying to New York" was interpreted as "I saw the Grand Canyon *while I was* flying to New York" rather than "I saw the Grand Canyon *which was* flying to New York.") Words with multiple meanings are interpreted in terms of the context in which they appear (Rumelhart, 1982). Bransford and Johnson (1973) found that a sentence was much more likely to be remembered if it was meaningful in the context in which it was found than if it was meaningless. They interpreted these findings to indicate that context is used in interpreting sentence meaning, and a sentence that does not fit the context may be difficult or impossible to understand, even if it is syntactically and semantically correct.

In summary, all of these studies show that lower level processes – the identification of words and letters – are influenced by intermediate and higher level processes – sentence comprehension and knowledge about the context. A conceptualization of reading must take into account these indications that the reading process makes use of top-down processing. As Thomas (1980: 34) stated, "What readers gain from a text, then, is only part of comprehension. Readers also integrate this information with the existing knowledge in their heads."

Interactive Processing in Reading

Goodman (1967, 1970) was among the first to spark the recent interest in reading as an interaction among levels of processing, rather than a bottom-up process. In this conceptualization of reading, the process is viewed as one in which the reader makes use of higher-level knowledge in order to comprehend lower-level structures.

Goodman characterized reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" in which the reader makes predictions and then samples input to confirm or disconfirm the predictions.

> The reader is not confined to information he receives from a half inch of print in clear focus. . . . The reader uses syntactic and semantic information as well. He predicts and anticipates on the basis of this information, sampling from the print just enough to confirm his guess of what's coming, to cue more semantic and syntactic information. Redundancy and sequential constraints in language, which the reader reacts to, make this prediction possible (Goodman, 1970: 131).

According to Goodman, what happens "behind the eye" is as important as what is on the printed page. Goodman focused on how the reader's syntactic and semantic knowledge assists in the process of reading comprehension. More recently, researchers have expanded this focus to include ways that both background knowledge and knowledge of discourse constraints assist comprehension.

Smith (1982) has been another strong and influential proponent of an interactional conceptualization of reading. He emphasized the role of what he referred to as *nonvisual information*. Nonvisual information is information, including background knowledge and linguistic knowledge, which does not come from the printed page but which is used in reading comprehension. Smith characterized the role of nonvisual information as reducing alternatives in reading. This allows the readers to make predictions about what will be coming next, based on orthographic, syntactic, semantic, and background information.

> What we have in our heads is a theory of what the world is like, a theory that is the basis of all our perceptions and understanding of the world. . . . If we can make sense of the world at all, it is by interpreting our interactions with the world in the light of our theory. . . . Anything that I cannot relate to the theory of the world in my head will not make

> sense to me. . . . The system of knowledge that is the theory of the world in our heads has a structure just like any other theory or system of organizing information. Information systems have three basic components — a set of categories, some rules for specifying membership of the categories, and a network of interrelations among categories (Smith, 1982: 54-57).

Smith emphasized the value of using this theory of the world in prediction while reading.

> An important difference between a skilled driver and a learner is that the skilled driver is able to project the car into the future while the learner's mind is more closely anchored to where the car is now — when it is usually too late to avoid accidents. The same difference tends to distinguish skilled readers from beginners, or from anyone having difficulty with a particular piece of reading. In fluent reading the eye is always ahead of the brain's decisions, checking for possible obstacles to a particular understanding. Readers concerned with the word directly in front of their nose will have trouble predicting — and they will have trouble comprehending (Smith, 1982: 61).

Smith asserted that the predictions that readers make on various levels help them avoid being overloaded by information from the printed page. Without some expectation of what is coming, the reader would be overwhelmed with new information. If reading is a process of making predictions and confirming those predictions, the more accurate the predictions, the more efficient the reading process will be. The more knowledgeable a reader is about the language itself, about how information is likely to be organized, about the topic area, etc., the more accurate the predictions are likely to be. One reason is that knowledge helps the reader narrow down the number of possible alternatives. To give a simple example, if the reader sees the word "the," he or she knows that it cannot be followed by a verb. This eliminates a large number of possibilities. The possibilities are further narrowed by knowledge of collocations in the language, knowledge of the topic area and knowledge of the organization of the reading passage.

Oller (1974) argued for what he referred to as *expectancy grammar*. He asserted that expectation was the basis for language comprehension. He wrote

> Because of the nature of human limitations, whether we are speaking of actions or ideas, in order for the mind to cope with the complexities inherent in our universe of experience, it categorizes and systematizes elements into hierarchies and sequences. . . . Because of the connections and relationships among incoming elements and of their tendency to cluster together in predictable ways, we learn to expect certain kinds of things to follow certain others. . . . We cannot say *exactly* what is the probability of the sentence "My grandfather was a kind and tolerant man." In fact, independent of context, the question [of the probability of the occurrence of that sentence] is not a meaningful one at all. However, we can easily agree that when asked the question, "What time is it?", the first sentence ["My grandfather was a kind and tolerant man"] is very improbable as an answer. On the other hand, if one were relating his autobiography, at certain points in such a context, the sentence "My grandfather was a kind and tolerant man" might be perfectly normal (i.e., quite probable). Similarly, in the sentence "The boy ran down the ____________," we cannot determine the exact probabilities of the fillers "street," "hall," "plank," "dog," etc., but we can say that any of these is more likely to occur than "moon," "of," "clock," "said," etc. (pp. 444, 445, 448)

Thus, expectations may not tell the reader exactly what will come next in a text, but they will limit the possibilities, making it easier to make reasonable predictions.

Schema Theory

Background

As far back as Kant (1781), it has been asserted that background knowledge plays a part in comprehension. Bartlett (1932) developed schema theory to explain how background knowledge is used by a reader/listener to understand and recall a text. Bartlett found that when participants read a story from an unfamiliar culture, their memory of the story changed over time to fit schemata from their own culture. Yet it was not until four decades later that there was wide interest in Bartlett's theories.

Literary criticism is one field in which there has been interest in the contribution that the reader makes to comprehension. The school called reader response criticism in particular has emphasized this aspect of reading. Jackson (1947) dealt extensively with the concept of the reader as "artist," and discussed reading in terms of the contribution that the reader makes to the creative process. Iser (1978: 24), an influential thinker in reader response criticism, wrote:

> Although it is clear that acts of comprehension are guided by the structure of the text, the latter can never exercise complete control. . . .(The reader) participates in both the production and comprehension of the work's intention.

In the mid-1970's, there was a revival of interest among psycholinguists and scholars in other areas in Bartlett's research and theories. Researchers again began looking at the influence of background knowledge and the organization of texts on comprehension, particularly reading comprehension.

Definition of Schema

Schemata are highly organized, generic knowledge structures composed of "slots" or "placeholders" for each component (den Uyl and van Oostendorp, 1980; Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, and Goetz, 1977). Schemata are hierarchically organized, with most important information at the top, down to the least important information (Anderson, 1978). Two broad types of schemata are content schemata and textual schemata. Content schemata contain general or specific information on a given topic. Textual schemata contain information about how rhetoric is or ought to be organized.

In addition to slots, a schema includes information about constraints on what can normally fill a particular slot (Anderson, 1978) and what the relationships are among the slots (Graesser, Woll, Kowalski, and Smith, 1980). A schema includes the network of associations of the concept (Pearson and Spiro, 1982). This process of filling the slots is called *instantiation* of a schema (Anderson, 1978).

In addition to information about constraints on what can fill a slot, schemata include "default values" for each slot. Therefore, if no information is available to fill a slot, the reader/listener fills the slot with a value that he/she knows to be typical in that slot. An example of the use of a default value for a slot is the following riddle: A boy and his father were in an accident and were taken to an emergency room. The surgeon who came to operate on the boy looked at him and said, "I can't operate on this boy, he's my son." Who is the surgeon? The answer is that the surgeon is the boy's mother, but for people whose default value for the gender of a surgeon is male, the riddle is very difficult. If a surgeon can be male or female, the answer is obvious. Thus while default values are useful in that they make communication more efficient by supplying information that the speaker/writer does not need to explicitly supply, they can also cause confusion and misunderstanding if they do not apply in a particular situation. This is particularly true when the hearer and speaker come from different cultures or subcultures, since their default values might be different. Default values are often based on deeply held assumptions, which are difficult to examine, so that the speaker and hearer may have a great deal of trouble discovering why they are miscommunicating.

Event Schemata

One specialized type of content schema is the *event schema*, also referred to by Schank and Abelson (1977) as a *script*. Like other schemata, event schemata are knowledge structures composed of slots labeled according to what may or must fill the slots. Event schemata contain information about stereotypical events or situations, such as eating in a restaurant or visiting the office of a medical professional. The unique characteristic of event schemata is that they are organized temporally (Schank and Abelson, 1977; Abelson, 1981). Event schemata specify the expected time ordering of events. I will use event schemata to explain how schemata are believed to function.

An event schema (script) for going to a restaurant would include information about servers, menus, paying the bill, and so on (Bower, Black, and Turner, 1979). The event schema would include the information that there must be a server; that the server can be male or female; that there must be a menu, whether it is a printed menu given to customers or a sign posted on the wall; that the menu will most likely have prices. In addition to a basic restaurant schema, there are restaurant schemata for specific types of restaurants, for example, first-class restaurants, family restaurants, and fast food establishments. These specific event schemata might include the information that in a first-class restaurant, the server is likely to be male, and the prices might be omitted on at least some of the menus.

Uses of Schemata

Schemata are used mainly in two ways (Bower, Black, and Turner, 1979). The first is in guiding actions in typical situations. For example, a customer entering a restaurant knows how to behave, based on event schemata. The customer knows that, for example, when eating at a sit-down restaurant, the server will bring a menu and then leave, that the customer should look at the menu and decide what to eat, and that the server will be back to take the order.

For the purpose of this paper, I am interested in the second use of schemata – comprehension. Schemata allow the reader/listener to make inferences and fill in information not explicitly included in the text (Anderson, 1978). This makes it unnecessary for a writer/speaker to include every detail that the reader/listener needs to know. The reader/listener makes inferences based on the information that is given and on information from the schema, whether from default values or from relationships that are specified among slots. For example, when eating at a restaurant is mentioned in a text, the reader/listener uses schemata to fill in details that are not specifically mentioned and to make inferences based on the information that is given. If a writer/speaker mentions that there are no prices on the menu, the reader might infer that the restaurant is a very fancy, expensive one.

To give another example, if someone asks, "Do you drive?" and the answer is, "I live in Manhattan," the answer is impossible to understand without associations, even though the grammar of the sentence is simple and there are no difficult words (as long as the hearer knows that Manhattan is part of New York City.) More than just grammatical and lexical knowledge is necessary to comprehend the meaning of the answer. Unless the hearer's schema for Manhattan includes the information that most people who live there take taxis or public transportation and few people own cars, the hearer would not understand that the answer means "no."

In summary, schemata are highly organized, generic knowledge structures composed of "slots" or "placeholders" for each component, including information about constraints on what can fill the slot and the relationships among the slots. Schemata are hierarchically organized, from the most general, important pieces of information to more specific, less important pieces.

As part of the process of comprehension, a reader/listener fills in the slots in the schema with information given by the writer/speaker and, for slots not explicitly mentioned, with default values or values inferred from other slots. This process is referred to as instantiation of the schema. It is necessary for comprehension, since the writer/speaker does not specify every piece of information necessary for comprehension.

The Application of Schema Theory to Reading

One area in which schema theory has stimulated a great deal of interest is in the area of reading comprehension. In this section, I discuss studies which indicate that reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader, including evidence of interaction between the text and the reader's knowledge on various levels.

A considerable amount of research has been done on how reading comprehension is influenced by content schemata. A number of studies have been done on native English speakers showing that readers demonstrate significantly better comprehension of texts for which they have greater background knowledge (e.g., Spiro, 1980; Taylor, 1979; Langer and Nicolich, 1981; Langer, 1984; Kintsch and Greene, 1978; Hare, 1982), or which fit schema that they have (e.g., den Uyl and van Oostendorp, 1980; Haberlandt, Berian, and Sandson, 1980; Anderson, Spiro, and Anderson, 1978). Bransford and Johnson (1972) found that when readers had no schema for a text, they recalled it significantly less well than if they did. Kozminsky (1977) showed that when the title of a text caused the reader to activate one particular schema rather than another, readers tended to comprehend the text from the perspective of the schema suggested in the title.

Taylor (1979) and Eamon (1978-1979) did studies on differences between the ways that good and poor readers use schemata. Using third and fifth graders, Taylor found that both good and poor readers had better comprehension of familiar material. However, the difference was significantly greater for unfamiliar material. This finding indicates that poor readers are able to use top-down processing when material is familiar but resort to bottom-up processing when the material is unfamiliar. Taylor did not speculate on how good readers were processing the texts. However, assuming that there actually were no differences in the familiarity of the texts, it appears that good readers were actually using some form of interactive processing. Possibly they were using either more general content schemata or textual schemata.

Eamon (1978-1979) found that good and poor readers recalled approximately the same number of pieces of information after reading a passage. However, the good readers recalled more of the important ideas of the reading passage than the poor readers did. In contrast, the poor readers did not discriminate in what they remembered between the most important information in the passage and the less important details. This indicates that good readers use schemata better than poor readers do to help them distinguish what is important in the passage.

All of these studies demonstrate the importance that content schemata have in reading comprehension.

Schema Theory and Lexical Knowledge

Schema theory also has a number of implications related to lexical knowledge and the learning of vocabulary.

Learning of vocabulary. Nagy and Herman (1987) studied the relationships between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension in native English speakers. In a meta-analysis of studies of this relationship, they found that, although there are strong correlations among vocabulary knowledge, general verbal ability, and reading comprehension (Freebody and Anderson, 1983), most studies indicate that there is little correspondence between learning vocabulary and improved reading comprehension. Nagy and Herman maintained that the problem with many of these studies was that they defined learning vocabulary as knowing definitional information about specific words. However, knowing a particular word means more than just knowing its definition or translation. That word is also connected to a network of related concepts — a schema — and it is often lack of access to this network that makes reading comprehension difficult, even when the reader knows the definitions of all of the words (Nattinger, 1988; Richards, 1976; Spinelli & Siskin, 1992).

> This brings us to perhaps the most basic reason that knowledge of definitions is not adequate to guarantee comprehension of text containing the words defined: reading comprehension depends on a wealth of encyclopedic knowledge and not merely on definitional knowledge of the words in the text. (Nagy, 1988: 7)

Nagy and Herman (1987) noted, based on their analysis, that the vocabulary programs that were successful in increasing reading proficiency were those which "incorporated instructional techniques aimed at developing both a network of semantic relationships among instructed words and ties between instructed words and prior knowledge" (p. 30). Words, they asserted,

> must be treated as labels for concepts that are embedded in larger schemata. Instruction must aim at establishing rich ties between new words and prior knowledge and must present new words and concepts in the context of larger domains of knowledge. . . . It is important to emphasize that such an approach to vocabulary is not just a better way to teach words, but apparently a necessary condition for improving reading comprehension (p. 30).

Nagy and Herman concluded that vocabulary instruction, to be successful, must include at least some of the following characteristics: multiple exposure to target words, exposure to words in meaningful contexts, rich or varied information about each word, the establishment of ties between instructed words and students' own experience and prior knowledge, and an active role of students in the word learning process. They believe that, although intensive vocabulary instruction with the above characteristics is useful, the regular experience of extensive reading is the most effective way of achieving these characteristics.

Eishout-Mohr and Daalen Kapteijns (1987) studied the processes by which readers figure out the meanings of words from context. Using nonsense words to which they assigned complex meanings, the researchers gave participants several sentences using the words and studied the strategies that the participants used to figure out the meanings. Their results indicated that the participants who were most proficient chose a schema which seemed to represent the concept most closely and then instantiated slots in the schema to refine the complexities of the meaning of the word. Thus schema play an important part in figuring out the meaning of a word from context.

Nation (1990) developed a procedure to teach students to guess the meaning of an unknown word from context. Nation's procedure involves determining the part of speech that the word is and then looking at the relationships between the unknown word and other words in the same sentence and then between that sentence and other sentences and paragraphs. Nation advises readers to try to determine relationships such as cause-and-effect or contrast. While such relationships might be signaled, often there is no signal, and the reader must depend, at least in part, on knowledge of the subject area to recognize these relationships. Though Nation does not use schema theory to support her explanation, it seems obvious that a schema would be necessary for the context and for the concept represented by the unknown word. Obviously the better developed a reader's schema is on the topic of a reading passage, the more accurately the reader can guess the meanings of unknown words.

Content Schema and Second Language Readers

As with first language readers, the traditional emphasis in the teaching of second language reading has been on the language to be comprehended and not on the person doing the comprehending.

> In these essentially 'linguistic' views of comprehension each word, each well-formed sentence, and every well-formed text 'has' a meaning. Meaning is conceived to be 'in' the text, to have a separate, independent existence from the reader. Failures to comprehend a nondefective text are viewed as being due to language-specific deficits – perhaps a word was not in the reader's vocabulary, a rule of grammar was misapplied, an anaphoric cohesive tie was improperly coordinated, and so on (Carrell, 1984c: 332).

The recent interest in reading and schema theory among first language reading specialists has attracted the attention of second language reading teachers and researchers. Second language reading theorists are coming to recognize that what the reader knows is as important as what is on the page.

Research on Second Language Learners

A number of studies have been done with second language learners in relation to reading and schema theory, using both content and textual schemata. The results of these studies are sometimes difficult to compare, because of the differences in participants, sets of variables, and techniques used. However, they can shed some light on how or whether second language learners make use of schemata in reading. In this section, I would like to discuss the studies and the implications they have about second language readers' use of schemata.

A study by Steffensen, Joag-Dev, and Anderson (1979) did not use language specifically as a variable, since the participants were American native English speakers and Indians (natives of India) whose English proficiency was very high. However, the study did address the issue of cultural differences in background knowledge and how this knowledge assists or interferes with comprehension.

The researchers had American and Indian participants read descriptions of weddings from their own culture and from the other culture and then write descriptions of the weddings. Members of both groups read the description from the other culture more slowly than the one from their own. They not only remembered more details of the wedding in their own culture and remembered them more accurately, they were able to draw correct inferences from the description of the wedding in their own culture. This would tend to indicate that the readers were making use of a schema that is specific to their culture for weddings in storing the text in memory and in interpreting the meaning of the text.

Participants also often drew incorrect inferences from the description of the wedding from the other culture, based on the schema for weddings in their own culture. For example, the description of the American wedding included a mention that the bride wore her grandmother's wedding gown. An Indian participant reported, in the recall protocol, that the dress was, unfortunately, old and out of fashion, a comment which would fit the Indian view that it is important for the bride's family to show their economic status by providing a new, fashionable wedding sari for the bride to wear. American readers, in contrast, emphasized the aspect of family tradition involved in the bride wearing her grandmother's dress, which fits with the schema for American weddings. Apparently when readers do not have an appropriate schema (as the Indian readers did not have a schema for American weddings) they interpret input according to the most similar schema that they do have (i.e., the schema for Indian weddings).

In addition, recall protocols were often vague in areas where readers did not have schemata. For example, the text on the Indian wedding contained details about the gifts exchanged by the families. Indian respondents not only tended to remember what the gifts were, they commented on the significance of the gifts. In contrast, descriptions of the gifts by Americans were vague and did not include any information about the significance of the gifts.

This study is an indication that, even in the native language or a strong second language, the reader's knowledge of the schematic background of a text greatly aids comprehension. In addition, lack of an appropriate schema for a text hampers accurate comprehension. It is likely to be even a more serious problem for readers of a second language who have less-than-adequate language proficiency.

One problem with this study is that the researchers did not measure the prior knowledge that the participants had about weddings in the other culture. While most Americans probably do not know much about Indian wedding customs, Indians living in the US may have had the opportunity to attend an American wedding or may have learned about typical American weddings from other sources. Participants who knew about wedding customs from the other culture may have produced more accurate recall protocols than those who did not.

This issue raises an important question in the intercultural study of schemata and comprehension. It is not clear whether the process of comprehending is different when making use of schemata from one's own culture than when making use of schemata learned from another culture. The question is complicated by the fact that schemata can overlap between cultures. Members of one culture do not necessarily share all of the same schemata. By the same token, members of different cultures can share the same schemata. For example, medical professionals in different cultures may share medical content schemata with each other that they do not share with other members of their own cultures.

Though some second language reading teachers have long recognized that their students were better able to deal with culturally familiar material (Carrell, 1983c), it was not until the 1980's that this was empirically tested. Studies of second language readers' ability to comprehend a text have traditionally focused on such factors as lexical difficulty and sentence length and complexity. However, when

Johnson (1981) investigated the effects of text complexity and cultural background on comprehension, she found that, for second language readers, cultural background had a greater effect on ability to understand the text than did semantic and syntactic complexity.

Johnson had American participants and intermediate and advanced Iranian participants read simplified or unsimplified versions of two passages, one based on American folklore and one on Iranian folklore. For Iranians, she found an interaction between cultural background and language complexity for the total number of events recalled. More events were recalled from the simplified American story than from the unsimplified one, though there was no difference for the Iranian story. However, she did not find an interaction between language complexity and cultural background or a main effect for language complexity when she measured inferences made from the texts. Iranian participants produced more inferences from the culturally familiar story than from the unfamiliar one, regardless of language complexity.

Americans remembered more propositions from the American story, and more from the unsimplified stories, raising the possibility that the structure of adapted texts is somehow different from the text structure that native speakers are accustomed to. Like the Iranians, Americans produced more inferences from the culturally familiar story than the unfamiliar one.

The content schema variable may have been confounded in this study by a textual schema variable. Possibly knowledge of the textual schemata, the conventionalized arrangement of the events and themes in a story, had something to do with the fact that readers understood the folktale from their own culture better.

The results of this study indicate that intermediate or advanced Iranian second language readers do make use of schemata, whether content schemata or textual schemata, at least in reading narratives. Also, content or textual schemata seem to be more important than language complexity in making inferences from the text, though simplified language seems to be helpful in comprehending the events in the story.

Levine and Haus (1985) studied the reading comprehension of American high school students in Spanish as a foreign language courses. The students were in their second and third years of study. Based on a multiple choice test, they identified students with limited knowledge and high knowledge of baseball. They tested the students' comprehension using two types of multiple choice questions. "Textually explicit" questions required information that could be taken directly from the text; "scriptally implicit" questions required both information from the text and background knowledge. In both cases, the researchers found significant differences between the group with high knowledge and the group with limited knowledge, though the effect was stronger for scriptally implicit questions. Thus the researchers found that background knowledge had a clear effect on the reading comprehension of second language readers.

Carrell (1983b) looked at the effects of three components of background knowledge: prior knowledge (familiar vs. novel), prior cues to the content of the text (context vs. no context) and the degree to which lexical items reveal the content area (transparent vs. opaque). Her participants, who were native speakers of English and high-intermediate and advanced nonnative speakers, included students from a variety of countries, but they were primarily Malaysians. In a 2 x 2 x 2 design, Carrell used the variables of context (providing or not providing and title and picture), transparency (presence or absence of vocabulary that provided cues to the content area) and familiarity (presence or absence of prior knowledge about the content). For the advanced group of students, familiarity was the only significant variable. More was recalled from the novel text than the familiar text. For the high-intermediate students, significantly more was recalled from the transparent version than the opaque version. All three variables affected the recall of native speakers.

Carrell concluded that native speakers make use of contextual cues to do top-down processing and lexical cues to do bottom-up processing, and that, at least in short-term memory, novel information is more memorable. The nonnative speakers in Carrell's study, on the other hand, are not efficient about making use of context or textual cues. They are not particularly proficient at either top-down or bottom-up processing. If this study has any external validity at all, it raises the question of how the advanced students, who were attending regular university classes, were managing the reading required in those classes.

One flaw in this study is operationalization of the familiar/novel variable. As a familiar text, Carrell used a description of the procedure for washing clothes. The largest number of participants in this study were Malaysians. However, according to a Malaysian informant, some of the steps in the procedure as it is described in the text would not have been familiar to Malaysians. For example, the writer of the text mentioned the possibility of going somewhere outside of the home to wash clothes. Malaysians do not use laundromats in Malaysia. Also, the writer mentioned dividing clothing into different groups according to color. This is another thing that Malaysians do not do, except in fairly rare cases of clothing whose colors might run (personal communication, A. Ibrahim, June 1, 1987). Therefore, the supposedly familiar text may have been at least partly novel. This may be a case where the nonnative readers were using an event schema that was different in content than the one that the writer intended, rather than one where they are not able to activate a schema that they already had.

This points up a problem in doing schema research with nonnative speakers. When measurement indicates that second language readers have not made use of schemata, the question arises of whether the problem is that they do not have the necessary schema, that they have not activated the schema that they have, or that they have activated an inappropriate schema.

Another weakness of the study was that there was no manipulation check on the prior knowledge manipulation. It is possible that some of the participants did not understand the significance of the picture that was presented to them, so that participants in the prior knowledge condition may not actually have had prior knowledge.

Hudson (1982) looked at the effects of different prereading exercises intended to activate schemata on the reading performance of beginning, intermediate and advanced students, primarily Iranians. In one condition, students were shown pictures related to the text, which they discussed. Afterwards, students privately generated predictions about the content of the text. In the second condition, students were given a list of vocabulary words and definitions. Both of these groups answered questions about the content of the text. In the third condition, students read the text, answered questions about it, read the text again, and answered the same questions again. Scores were significantly higher for the first condition for beginning and intermediate students. There was no difference for advanced students. Hudson interpreted this to indicate that advanced readers were able to activate schemata without outside help, but at the lower levels, some help in activating schemata was necessary.

While this study does indicate that prereading exercises are of some use to beginning and intermediate students, it is not clear from the study what aspects of the prereading exercise were effective in activating the schema. In the first condition, participants saw pictures related to the story, discussed what was in the pictures, and generated predictions. This raises a number of questions about the necessary and sufficient conditions for activating schemata using prereading exercises. Was it one of these three steps that activated the schema, or an interaction of the three? Would, for example, studying the pictures without discussing them have produced the same results? Was generating predictions a necessary part of the process? Would generating predictions have been sufficient alone? Further research to clarify the answers to these questions would be useful.

Also, since there was no control group that did not receive any treatment, we do not know how the treatments Hudson used compared with no treatment at all, though the assumption probably would be that groups with no treatment would not have done as well as students in the first condition. If that assumption is correct, this study indicates that it is inadvisable to let students at the intermediate level or below read a text "cold."

Taglieber, Johnson, and Yarbrough (1988) used four prereading conditions — a pictorial context, prequestioning, vocabulary preteaching, and a control group with no prereading activity. The first three were intended to represent three prereading activities that EFL students might use for their reading assignments. In the pictorial context condition, students were shown slides related to the reading passage and were encouraged to describe the pictures, find a connection among them, and predict what the reading would be about. In the vocabulary preteaching condition, participants were presented with words in a context unrelated to the reading passage and tried to use the context to figure out the definition of the word. In the prequestioning condition, students were given a one-sentence summary of the reading passage and asked to formulate questions that they thought the reading passage might answer. The researchers found that pictorial context and prequestioning were most effective in increasing reading comprehension, though preteaching vocabulary was more effective than no treatment. They attributed the superior results for the first two conditions to the role of these activities in activating appropriate schemata. In addition, the researchers observed that the students did not participate as actively in the discussion of vocabulary as they did in the other two activities. It would be useful to compare the two more successful activities with vocabulary activities that provide richer information about the words, such as those advocated by Nagy and Herman (1987). It may be that such vocabulary activities and semantic mapping or semantic analysis, described later in this paper, would be more effective in activating schemata than trying to learn new lexical items in an unrelated context. Such activities might also help students become more interested and more actively involved in the discussion than they were in this study.

It would also be useful to see to what extent these activities can be done independently by students reading on their own. If students could be taught to briefly look at a reading passage and the visuals provided for it and formulate their own questions about it, and if this resulted in better reading comprehension, this would be a beneficial activity.

In responses to a separate questionnaire, students indicated that they found the prereading activities useful and recommended that they be used in regular classes. The students were able to recognize the value of activating schemata before reading a passage.

Akagawa (1992) studied the effect of prereading activities intended to activate schemata on the reading comprehension of two passages, one with 2% unfamiliar words, one with 6% unfamiliar words. The participants were high school seniors in Japan who were divided into three conditions. In the first condition, the participants were presented with an illustration related to the story, and they were encouraged to generate questions about it before they read the reading passage. The procedure was intended to activate schemata. In the second condition, participants were pretaught vocabulary words that the researcher thought might be difficult. The third group was a control group. Reading comprehension was evaluated using open-ended questions and a recall protocol.

The results of the study indicated that students in the visual presentation condition had the best comprehension, particularly in global understanding of the reading, and that students in all conditions had more difficulty with the passage with more unfamiliar words. As with Hudson's (1982) study, since participants in the visual presentation condition both looked at a picture and generated questions about it, it is not clear which of these resulted in improved reading comprehension. Another problem was that it is possible that the students in the visual presentation condition depended on the illustration not just to activate their schemata but also for the information that they produced in the recall protocol and the answers to the questions. In other words, they depended on the visual information, not the English words. However, Akagawa does not reproduce the illustrations or the recall protocols, so it is difficult to assess the validity of this criticism.

A study by Nelson and Schmid (1989) indicated that using materials for which students already have well-developed schemata are more effective for improving reading performance on standardized tests than material for which they do not have well-developed schemata. In this study, the researchers compared reading classes of Egyptian students preparing to go overseas. All of the classes emphasized developing reading strategies, but two of the classes used materials related to Egyptian and Arabic culture, and four used materials related to American culture. The former classes showed significantly more improvement in scores on a standardized test at the end of an eight-week period than the latter did. The results of the study indicate that not only will students better understand a passage for which they have a well-developed schema, but a familiar passage is more useful to them in developing reading skills that can be transferred to other passages.

Use of lexical knowledge. Several studies have been done on the degree to which readers depend on the lexicon as they read. Cziko (1980) analyzed errors made in oral reading by intermediate and advanced readers of French as a second language and by native French speakers. He found that intermediate readers made errors that indicated greater reliance on graphic information than on contextual information, indicating a bottom-up strategy dependent on lexicon. Advanced readers, on the other hand, depended more on context, though not as much as native speakers did.

Ulijn (1981, 1984), using native Dutch speaking readers of French as a second language, found that more misunderstandings were caused by problems with vocabulary than by problems with syntax. This may indicate that readers are more dependent on their knowledge of vocabulary than on their knowledge of syntax.

Yorio (1971) did a survey of native Spanish speakers studying English as a second language and found that they felt that their lack of vocabulary was their greatest handicap. Lack of knowledge of grammar was considered a considerably less serious problem.

These studies indicate a pattern of dependence on vocabulary by second language readers. What this seems to indicate is that readers depend on bottom-up processing in reading in their second language. While Cziko (1980) and Ulijn (1981, 1984) did not appeal to schema theory in their explanation, it does seem to fit with the results that they found. Second language readers appear to identify content words and make use of schemata to identify relationships among those words.

Implications of Research

Based on these studies, it appears that concern about linguistic difficulty of texts is at least partially misplaced. In addition to lack of adequate linguistic proficiency, lack of appropriate schemata related to a text, or inability to make use of the schemata, can be sources of serious problems in comprehension. Carrell (1984c) listed ways in which a reader could miscomprehend or not comprehend because of ways that schemata interact with the text. She listed 1) no existing schema (the text assumes background knowledge that the reader does not possess), 2) naive schema (insufficiently developed schema), 3) poor text (not enough cues to the appropriate schema), 4) multiple schemata appropriate (more than one interpretation of the text possible, and the reader does not know which one to choose), and 5) schema intrusion (reader chooses an inappropriate schema).

Second language readers seem to make some use of the schemata that they have in second languages, though they seem to do so less well than native speakers do. At intermediate levels of reading proficiency, readers seem to be using a bottom-up strategy of processing, in which they identify content words and use schemata to determine how the words should be related.

Hudson (1982) found that a prereading technique designed to activate the reader's schemata related to a reading passage is useful in improving reading comprehension, a conclusion supported by Taglieber, Johnson, and Yarbrough (1988). However, due to confounding of the variables in these studies, it is not possible to determine which of the steps, or combinations of steps, in the prereading activity produced the effect.

Much more research is needed in the area of second language reading and schema theory and how these apply to the classroom before definitive conclusions can be reached in this area.

Implications for the Second Language Classroom

Research on schema theory in general and its application to reading in a second language in particular has important implications for the second language classroom. Studies show that readings with an unfamiliar background, including an unfamiliar cultural background, are more difficult to understand. Understanding inferences and relationships among different pieces of information is a particular problem when reading about a topic for which the reader does not have a sufficiently developed schema, whether the reader is a native or nonnative speaker of the language of the text.

In second language reading classes, teachers and materials developers should consider findings related to reading and schema theory. However, as Carrell (1986) pointed out, most of the research in the area of schema theory and second language learning has not been done in classroom settings. In addition, the research that has been done has not been applied to a variety of settings. Therefore, caution is necessary in applying conclusions to classroom teaching. The findings have implications in four major areas: 1) choice of materials, 2) helping students activate schemata, 3) helping students deal with reading texts independently, and 4) developing lexical knowledge. I will discuss each of these.

Choice of Materials

Johnson (1981) and Chihara and Sakurai (1987) found that familiarity with the cultural background of a text had a greater influence on comprehension than did language complexity. While it is not appropriate to ignore language complexity entirely in choosing materials, this finding indicates that familiarity with the background of materials should be a major factor in decisions about choices of reading materials, especially at lower levels of language proficiency. In fact, if teaching reading strategies and improving reading comprehension is the major focus of the course, it may be best to use culturally familiar materials, according to the results of research by Nelson and Schmid (1989).

In choosing materials, the teacher needs to think very carefully about what background knowledge the author is assuming and whether the students can reasonably be expected to have that background knowledge. Often authentic materials — passages written by and for native English speakers — assume background information nonnative English speakers, or even native English speakers from another culture, do not share. Even materials written specifically for nonnative speakers may assume background information that the students do not have, since writers may not be sensitive to this problem or may not have an accurate idea of how much the students are likely to know about the topic. In choosing materials, the teacher must consider the background information that the writer is assuming. If the teacher decides to use materials that assume background knowledge that students are not likely to have, some of the prereading activities must supply students with that knowledge through explanation, another reading, discussion, etc.

One way to make use of the role of schemata in reading is to choose materials for ***narrow reading***. Narrow reading involves having students read various passages on a related topic. As the students read more and more on the topic, their schema becomes better developed, and they are able to use that background knowledge in future readings on that topic.

Helping Students Activate Schemata

Students may have some difficulty activating their schemata independently. Hudson (1982) and Taglieber, Johnson, and Yarbrough (1988) found that students at the beginning and intermediate levels who experienced a prereading activity specifically intended to activate a schema did better than students who did other prereading activities or none at all. These results indicate that prereading activities are important, especially at the beginning and intermediate levels. However, more research needs to be done to refine knowledge about what is necessary and sufficient in such prereading activities, what other activities might be useful, and how students can be taught to do them effectively.

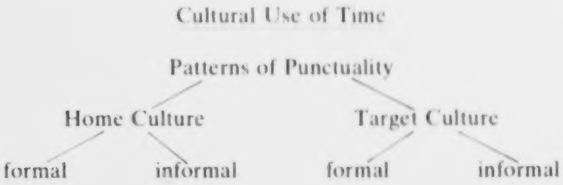
Activating schemata involves reminding students of what they already know about a topic. How this is done depends, in part, on the students' level of proficiency. One method is for the teacher to write simple true/false, multiple choice, or short answer questions related to the topic, questions that students are likely to know the answers to. For example, a true/false question might be "George Washington was the first President of the United States." Short answer questions might be, "Who was George Washington?", "When did he live?", and "What was he famous for?" These questions can be answered by the entire class, individual students, or groups or pairs of students.

Students can also look at the text itself to help them activate schemata. They can look at pictures, the title, headings, and words in boldface type or italics, and use these to predict what the passage will be about. It is also sometimes useful to read the first sentence in each paragraph, since that is often the topic sentence. Students can either produce the predictions themselves or choose the topics which are most likely to be included in the passage from a list of related topics provided by the teacher.

Wilson (1987) recommended having students work together in groups to list what they already know about the topic and make predictions about the content of the reading passage. Working together in groups allows students to pool their knowledge and thus build up more background knowledge in addition to activating knowledge they already have.

Relating the reading passage to something students already know can also be useful in activating schemata. For example, as a prereading exercise, the teacher can ask students about something in their own culture or their own experience related to the reading passage. For example, if the reading is about how Valentine's Day is celebrated in the United States, the teacher might ask about how it is celebrated in Japan, wording the questions in ways that bring out the differences between the celebrations in the two countries.

Melendez and Pritchard (1985) suggest supplying an overview of the organization of the reading, for example, in the form of a diagram:



Teachers can use such a diagram as the basis for a discussion, perhaps focusing on patterns of punctuality in the home culture, in order to activate students' schemata and prepare them for what they will be reading.

Preparing Students to Read Independently

The previous section raises another issue — how well do techniques for activating schemata in a classroom setting transfer to independent reading? It is vital that the reading classroom prepare students for reading outside of the classroom. Can second language students be taught to do prereading preparation that will help them activate the schemata that they need to use? To answer these questions, more research is needed, preferably over a period of time. Prereading techniques used by Hudson (1982) and Taglieber, Johnson, and Yarbrough (1988) might be modified so that students are taught to look at the title, subheadings, etc., of a text, think about what they know about the subject, and make predictions about what is likely to be included in the text. Carrell (1985) found that students could be taught to identify the textual schema for a text, and that this helped them comprehend the text better. Possibly a similar technique would work for content schemata.

Developing Lexical Knowledge

Research indicates that the most effective ways to teach vocabulary involve using context. However, in using context to teach vocabulary, it is very important to keep in mind the background knowledge that the students can be expected to have. For instance, Nation (1990) gives an example of an exercise in which students use the context to learn the meanings of new words by reading a series of sentences that contain each word to be learned. However, some of the sentences are based on background information that Japanese students are unlikely to have. For example, one sentence would require the student to know about birthday parties, which are not common in Japan. Teachers who are using context to teach vocabulary must be sensitive to the background knowledge that students are likely to have.

Nagy (1988) described a variety of techniques for teaching vocabulary that give students rich information about words, which helps them develop schemata. While Nagy maintained that nothing can take the place of extensive reading for learning the large quantity of words necessary to become a truly proficient reader, activities like these are useful for developing a depth and breadth of understanding of lexical items that is often difficult to develop through incidental encounters. Hague (1987) noted that it is easier to acquire new information when it is related to something previously known, so activities that relate new words to known words are particularly effective. Hague also suggests presenting words in semantic fields that are culturally meaningful in the target culture. For example, learning names of foods according to what would traditionally be eaten at different meals is more meaningful and gives more information about the target culture than presenting them according to traditional food groups. Finally, according to Laufer (1990), presenting words in semantic fields works best when known words and a few new words are presented together. It is also best to avoid new words with similar form, such as "cancel," "conceal," and "council," since new words with similar forms presented at the same time are easily confused. I will describe three activities that give students rich information about words here.

Semantic mapping. A vocabulary learning technique that makes use of schemata is networking or semantic mapping, also referred to as graphic organizers or visual-spatial displays (Kameenui, Dixon, and Carnine, 1987). These are representations of the organization of information that use lines, arrows, geometric shapes, and spatial arrangements to indicate the relationships among pieces of information. Among the useful types of relationships to identify (Uslenghi Maiguashea, 1984) are:

1. relationships of similarity of meaning (synonyms)
2. relationships of opposition and contrast (antonyms)
3. relationships between words with a high probability of occurring together in a text
4. relationships of contiguity (part/whole)

5. taxonomic relationships
6. relationships of derivation
7. word families
8. relationships of free association

Cells in the visual display are connected and arranged in ways that convey such relationships. These techniques for teaching vocabulary help develop schemata or help elaborate on schemata that the students already have and thus are a way of teaching vocabulary words that makes use of the way information is organized. Using sematic mapping is particularly useful when teaching vocabulary related to a reading passage, because the information in the reading passage can be used as a basis for understanding relationships among concepts.

To use semantic mapping in the classroom, the teacher begins with a basic theme. If this is being done in preparation for reading a particular passage, the theme would be related to the passage. The students generate a list of words related to that theme, and, working with the students, the teacher groups the words into related categories and the students find labels for the categories. The teacher might also supply words not suggested by the students and ask the students to place them in appropriate categories. The class can then discuss how new words are related to familiar words and concepts and also experiences students have had related to the concepts.

This procedure has both advantages and limitations. In terms of language use, this procedure activates background knowledge; allows the teacher to assess the background knowledge of the students, so that he/she can deal with deficiencies in background knowledge; and serves as the basis for future reading and writing assignments. However, one semantic map probably cannot be used to teach all the unknown words in a reading selection.

It is also a technique that can be taught to students to do independently. A study by Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989) indicated that training in such a strategy had a positive effect on reading comprehension.

Semantic analysis. A technique called semantic feature analysis also helps establish connections among related words, helping students develop schemata. The process involves developing a matrix of related words and their semantic features. The teacher chooses words that form a semantically related group, such as "house," "mansion," "shack," "shed," "barn," "tent," and "shanty," some of which are already familiar to students. These words appear vertically on the left side of the matrix. Across the top appear words that describe some of the features of the group of words. In the case of the above words, such characteristics as, "for people," "for animals," "for storage," "big/fancy," "crude/rough," "permanent," and "portable" can be used. Where the rows and columns intersect, symbols are used to indicate whether that particular feature is a characteristic of the word in question. For example, a plus sign (" + ") could be used to indicate that a house is for people; a minus sign (" − ") could be used to indicate that it is not for animals; and a circle ("○") to indicate that the meaning of the word does not include information about whether a house is large/fancy.

Hierarchical or linear arrays. Hierarchical or linear arrays also show relationships among words and their characteristics. Using the above example, the hierarchical array in Figure 1 could be developed.

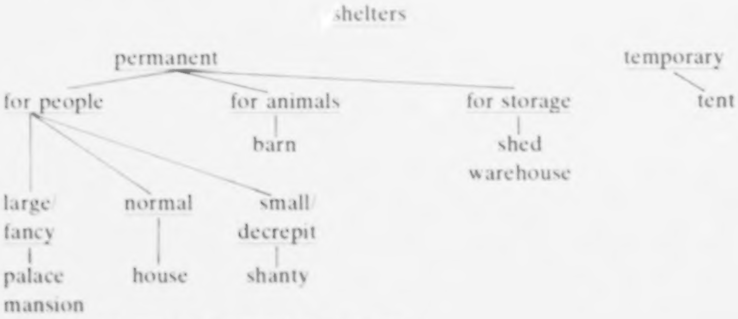

shelters
permanent
temporary
for people
for animals
for storage
tent
barn
shed
warehouse
large/
fancy
normal
small/
decrepit
palace
mansion
house
shanty

Figure 1. Hierarchical array for "shelters."

Linear arrays put words along a continuum according to the degree of some criteria, such as size, intensity, loudness, or chronology. Two examples would be:

annoyed → angry → enraged → furious
freezing → cold → cool → lukewarm → warm → hot → scalding

Again, linear arrays help students understand the relationships among words with related meanings.

Conclusion

Research on schema theory has indicated that background knowledge is a vital element in comprehension. Taking schemata into account has important implications for English language teaching. While many suggestions have been made for how schema theory can be applied in the classroom, much more research needs to be done about the effectiveness of various applications and also for the use of these applications outside of the classroom. Questions for future research include: How can the background knowledge necessary for a reading passage be determined? If students lack necessary background knowledge, how can it most effectively be presented to them? Orally? With a reading passage? In the native language? What techniques are best for activating schemata before reading? How can readers most effectively activate their schemata in preparation for reading a passage? How can they be taught strategies to do this independently? How can vocabulary be taught most effectively in ways that make use of the structure of students' schemata and which improve reading comprehension? What kind of words should be explicitly taught, and which ones should students learn through incidental encounters in extensive reading material? What methods of enriching vocabulary are most effective?

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2. Textual Schemata and English Language Education

Abstract

Research in reading comprehension has indicated that what the reader knows plays a role in the process of comprehension. This knowledge includes what the reader knows about how texts and individual paragraphs are conventionally organized and how relationships among different types of information are signaled. A knowledge of such conventions can help the reader pick out the most important information in a passage and concentrate on the content instead of form.

Some examples of useful information for readers are the parts of a paragraph or text (introduction, discussion, and conclusion); types of paragraphs or texts (for example, cause and effect, problem/solution, illustration, and comparison and contrast); and words and phrases which indicate the relationship between pieces of information (for example, contrasting information, additional information, intensified information, and cause or consequence).

In this paper, I discuss textual schemata and how they are believed to influence reading comprehension. I also discuss activities for language students which help them learn to make use of rhetorical schemata.

Reading comprehension has traditionally been conceptualized as a skill in which the reader passively takes in what the writer has written. However, over the past several years, researchers and theorists have come to recognize that this so-called passive skill does indeed require active participation. The interaction between the reader's own knowledge and the text results in comprehension. Beginning with such theorists as Goodman (1967) and Smith (1971), there has been a trend toward considering the contributions of the reader in interpretation of the text. This movement includes theorists not only in psycholinguistics but also in philosophy, psychology, communication, and literary criticism. *Schema theory* is a theory developed to help explain how readers make use of their own knowledge in interaction with the text to arrive at comprehension.

In this paper, I will look at the process of reading and at schema theory in general and textual schemata in particular. I will discuss the effect that textual schemata have on reading, specifically the reading of nonnative speakers of English, and last, I will conclude with recommendations for the second/foreign language classroom.

Reading – Two Conceptualizations

Traditional conceptualizations of reading depict it as a unidirectional, passive process. Models such as those proposed by Gough (1972) and LaBerge and Samuels (1974) are typical of this viewpoint. According to these models, reading is an additive process in which the reader puts symbols together into morphological clusters, morphological clusters into words, words into phrases, phrases into sentences, and sentences into overall meaning. This conceptualization treats reading as what is sometimes referred to as a *bottom-up process*, because the reader begins with the lowest level, symbols, and works up to higher levels. These models reflect traditional attitudes toward reading.

However, studies of the reading process have produced results that cannot be explained in terms of such a unidirectional model. These studies (for example, Nash-Weber [1975], Reicher [1969], Rumelhart [1982], Kolers [1970], Weber [1970], Stevens and Rumelhart [1975], Meyer and Schvaneveldt [1971], Schank [1973], and Bransford and Johnson [1973] – or see Kitao [1989] or Rumelhart [1982] for detailed discussions of these studies) indicate that recognition of words influences recognition of the symbols that make them up, and recognition of words is influenced by a knowledge of the syntactic and semantic context. All of these studies show that lower level processes — the identification of words and letters — are influenced by intermediate and higher level processes — sentence comprehension and knowledge about the context. A conceptualization of reading must take into account these indications that there is an interaction between higher and lower levels. As Thomas (1980: 34) stated, "What readers gain from a text, then, is only part of comprehension. Readers also integrate this information with the existing knowledge in their heads."

Interactive Processing in Reading

Goodman (1967, 1970) helped stimulate interest in reading as an interaction among levels of processing rather than a bottom-up process. Goodman proposed a view of reading as a process in which the reader makes use of higher-level knowledge in order to comprehend lower-level structures. He characterized reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" in which the reader makes predictions and then samples input to confirm or disconfirm the predictions and to serve as a basis for further predictions. Goodman believed that what happens "behind the eye" is as important as the test itself. Goodman focused on how the reader used syntactic and semantic knowledge in the process of reading. More recently, researchers have expanded this focus to include ways that both background knowledge and knowledge of discourse and rhetorical patterns are utilized in comprehension.

Smith (1982) has also supported this interactional conceptualization of reading. He emphasized the role of what he referred to as *nonvisual information*, that is, information that is not on the printed page, including background knowledge and rhetorical knowledge. Smith believed that the role of nonvisual information was reducing alternatives in reading in order to allow the reader to make more accurate predictions about the text. Since reading is a process of predicting, sampling, and revising, then the better use readers make of nonvisual information, the more accurate their predictions will be, and the more accurate their predictions are, the more efficient readers they will be.

Schema Theory

Definition

Schemata are defined as highly organized, generic knowledge structures with *slots* or *placeholders* for each component (den Uyl and van Oostendorp, 1980; Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, and Goetz, 1977). Two broad types of schemata are content schemata and textual schemata. Content schemata contain general or specific information on a given topic. Textual schemata contain information about standard rhetorical patterns into which texts are organized. In addition to information about constraints on what can fill a slot, schemata include *default values* for each slot. Therefore, if no information is available to fill a slot, the reader fills the slot with a value that he/she knows to be typical in that slot. Schemata are hierarchically organized from the most important information to the least important (Anderson, 1978).

Knowledge of textual schemata helps readers make more accurate predictions and therefore read more efficiently. In addition, knowing about rhetorical patterns allows readers to concentrate on content once the pattern is recognized and also helps readers determine the relative importance of pieces of information.

Rhetorical Patterns

Textual schemata might be compared to a general outline of the type of information that would be expected in a given type of textual organization. For example, in a simple personal opinion text, the title of the outline would be the statement of the opinion itself.

The Roman numerals would represent individual reasons that support the opinion, and capital letters, Arabic numerals, etc., would represent elaborations on the reasons. The outline might look like this:

Opinion

I. Reason # 1
   A. explanation
   B. explanation
II. Reason # 2
   A. explanation
   B. explanation

Of course, a variety of rhetorical patterns may be nested within one text. For example, in a text with problem-solution organization, the writer may compare and contrast two or more of the solutions or express an opinion on which solution is best.

There are several types of expository rhetorical organization. Below is a list of eleven major types. These can be found in both paragraphs and longer texts.

1) description — describes physical appearance or characteristics of something
2) narrative — tells a story
3) directions — gives instructions on how to do something
4) personal opinion — states an opinion and reasons to support it
5) illustration — makes a generalization and supports it either with an anecdote or with facts, data, etc.
6) classification — divides people, places, ideas, etc., into categories
7) analysis — divides one large thing up into smaller parts
8) cause and effect — introduces a cause and discusses effects or introduces an effect and discusses causes
9) comparison/contrast — discusses similarities and/or differences between two objects, ideas, people, etc.
10) problem-solution — presents a problem and discusses one or

more solutions

11) allegory — explains truths about human conduct or actions through symbols

Meyer and Rice (1982) propose a model of how readers use text structure. Skilled readers approach a text with knowledge of the conventional organization of texts. They note cues in the title and introduction that indicate the pattern that the writer plans to use. They also search for an organizational framework that fits the text that they are reading; that is, they watch for patterns that tie the propositions in the text together. They also watch for typical vocabulary related to a specific pattern. When they identify the rhetorical pattern, they interpret new information from the text in the light of both the organization they are expecting and their knowledge of the content area. In a long text, skilled readers are able to make use of the hierarchical nature of textual schemata to encode the most important information from the text. Thus, textual schemata allow readers both to make predictions about the content of the text and to make decisions about the most important propositions in the text.

For example, according to Meyer and Rice's model, if a skilled reader is reading a text about the problem of college entrance examinations in Japan and some potential solutions, he/she uses the title or introductory sentences or paragraphs to try to identify the overall pattern of the text. A title like "Examination Hell: The Problem and Some Solutions" would clearly identify a problem/solution pattern. Also, writers often indirectly identify the pattern that they will be using with expressions like, "In this article, I will discuss the problem of college entrance examinations and propose three solutions." If the pattern is not easily identifiable from cues in the title or introduction, the reader notes vocabulary related to a particular pattern. In this case, words such as "propose," "suggest," and "should" may help identify the pattern. Finally, if the reader finds a statement of a problem, followed a statement of a solution, he/she will recognize that the way these fit together is in a problem/solution pattern. This helps the reader know what to expect and how pieces of information are tied together. Because of the hierarchical nature of textual schemata, it also helps the reader to know which pieces of information are most important — for example, that the statement of a solution would be more important than further explanation of that solution.

In addition to knowledge about rhetorical patterns, readers of English expect a text to have three parts — an introduction, a discussion, and a conclusion. The introduction makes a statement about a topic and informs the reader of what aspect(s) of the topic the writer plans to deal with. The discussion expands on the statement made about the topic in the introduction and, for example, gives examples, compares two ideas, or states reasons for opinions. The conclusion completes the discussion by summarizing it, restating the main idea, or drawing a conclusion. As public speaking students are taught, "First you tell the audience what you are going to tell them, then you tell them, then you tell them what you told them."

Paragraphs are expected to have a similar pattern, though when they are part of actual texts, they often omit the conclusion. Paragraphs are also expected to have a topic sentence, explicit or implied — a sentence, often in the introduction, that states the main topic of the paragraph or text.

Another type of textual schema is a story grammar or story schema. Story grammars are representations of a narrative. Though story grammars are the most extensively studied type of schema, I do not intend to deal with them specifically in this paper. For a discussion of story grammars and second language learners, see Carrell (1984).

Cohesive Ties

Another aspect of rhetorical organization is related to cohesive ties within a text. Halliday and Hassan (1976) categorized and described types of cohesion in English. They divided cohesive ties into two types, lexical ties and grammatical ties. Lexical ties were further divided into collocation (words that tend to occur together) and reiteration (repetition, either of the same word or of a synonym, superordinate word or general noun). Grammatical ties were divided into four categories:

1) reference — personal, demonstrative, and comparative pronouns
2) substitution — replacing nouns (e.g., with "one[s]"), verbs (e.g., with "do"), and clauses (e.g., with "so")
3) ellipsis — leaving out nouns, verbs, etc.
4) conjunctions — transitions which indicate relationships within and between sentences or parts of the text

The last category (which I will call transitions for the purpose of this paper) is particularly important in assisting readers' comprehension. Williams (1983) characterized transitions (which he referred to as discourse markers) as signposts on a road: they tell the reader whether the road will, for example, be going straight (additional information) or changing direction (contrasting information), whether what is coming is the consequence of what has come before (consequences), or when the road is about to come to an end (conclusion). As mentioned before, reading is a process of sampling and prediction. Understanding transitions helps make the predictions more accurate and therefore helps make reading more efficient.

Various typologies have been proposed for transitions. The following is a list of types of transitions that I have found useful. For each transition, I have given a brief explanation and some examples:

1) additional information — adds to previous information; and; furthermore; moreover; in addition; also
2) restatement — indicates that what follows is a rewording of what has appeared previously; in other words, i.e., that is, in short
3) expected information — introduces something that the reader is likely to already know or that the reader would expect from pre-

vious information or from general knowledge; of course, naturally, surely, obviously

4) unexpected information — introduces something that the reader would not be expected to know or which, based on previous information, is surprising; amazingly, surprisingly
5) intensified information — introduces information that is stronger than what came before; in fact, as a matter of fact
6) examples — introduces examples; for example, for instance, to illustrate, such as, including
7) consequences — introduces results; so, therefore, as a result, consequently
8) causes — introduces causes; because (of); due to; thanks to
9) contrasting information — introduces information that is the opposite of or in contrast to what came before; however, but, although, even though, nevertheless
10) order — introduces either sequence or items on a list; first, second, then, next
11) conclusion — introduces summary, conclusion, or restatement which appears at the end of a text, section of a text or a paragraph; in short, therefore, in conclusion, in summary; on the whole

Williams (1983) asserted that the efficient reader first recognizes that a given word or phrase is a transition and then identifies the function of the transition, that is decides what sort of relationship it is signaling.

Textual Schema and Second/Foreign Language Readers

Previous Studies

Various studies have been done on second/foreign language learners and their use of textual schemata. In this section, I will review some of these studies. Carrell (1984) studied the use of textual schemata by students of various language groups. She used four rhetorical patterns and found that second language readers in general had more difficulty with texts organized in the collection of descriptions pattern than those in the cause-and-effect, problem/solution, or comparison/contrast patterns. When the students were divided into different language groups, she found that the results were the same for native Spanish speakers but different for Arabic speakers and speakers of Oriental languages (mainly Korean and some Chinese). Arabic speakers found comparison/contrast easiest, problem/solution and collection of descriptions second most easy, and cause and effect most difficult. Speakers of Oriental languages found cause-and-effect and problem/solution organization significantly easier than comparison/contrast and collection of descriptions.

In a later study, Carrell (1985) taught students in an experimental group about four types of rhetorical organization and had them practice using them in reading. She found that the reading comprehension of the students in the experimental group improved significantly more than the students in the control group, and that this effect persisted when students were tested again three weeks later.

Kern (1989) did a study in which native English speakers who were intermediate students of French in an experimental group were taught various strategies for reading, including activities to make students aware of cohesive relationships and discourse patterns. He found that students in the experimental group showed significantly more improvement than those in the control group. Since Kern taught students a number of strategies, some of which were not directly related to rhetorical organization (e.g., determining word meaning from context), it is difficult tell exactly how much effect strategies related to textual schemata had on the students' improvement in reading. However, this study does lend support to the idea that teaching students about rhetorical organization and transitions and having them practice making use of the information improves their foreign language reading comprehension.

One result of Kern's study was that students with lower reading proficiency benefited most from the instruction in reading strategies. Kern's conclusion from these results was that students with highe. proficiency were already transferring many of these strategies from their native language.

Implications for the Second/Foreign Language Classroom

There are a variety of ways that teachers can apply theory and research on textual schemata to the second/foreign language classroom. In this section, I will discuss various strategies for making students aware of common rhetorical patters of English and how to make use of them in reading, particularly as they apply to the situation in Japan.

Rhetorical patterns. Information about textual schema can apply to various levels of reading. Rhetorical patterns can be identified in both individual paragraphs and entire texts. The methods of teaching about rhetorical patterns can be applied to either paragraphs or texts, depending on the goals of the class and the students' level of proficiency. In my experience, it has been best to at least initially introduce the concept of rhetorical patterns using paragraphs or very short passages before going on to longer texts.

Mikulecky (1984) suggested introducing the idea of rhetorical patterns by showing students five drawings, four with definite, recognizable patterns (e.g., concentric squares, wavy lines inside a square), and one with no pattern at all. After looking at the drawings for one minute, students try to reproduce them. The one with no pattern is, of course, always the most difficult to reproduce. A discussion of the reason for this can be used to introduce the concept of patterns of organization in texts and how they are useful.

As mentioned above, results of a study by Carrell (1985) indicated that teaching students about the rhetorical patterns of English improves their reading comprehension. In her study, Carrell introduced students to four major expository discourse types (collection of descriptions, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, and cause and effect). The importance of recognizing rhetorical patterns was explained to students, along with descriptions of the four rhetorical patterns and ways of recognizing them and using them in writing a summary of a text. Examples of texts illustrating the different rhetorical patterns were introduced. Students were also encouraged to apply what they learned in the class to their reading outside of the classroom. According to Carrell's study, this training produced significant improvement in students' reading comprehension in comparison to the control group.

In addition to describing the patterns and showing students examples of them, outlines or other diagrams of paragraphs or essays are often useful in making patterns clear to students (Carrell, 1989; Meyer and Rice, 1982). In my experience, one of the problems that Japanese students have in reading is that they read as if every sentence were equally important. An outline is a useful way of pointing out the relative importance of pieces of information in a paragraph or essay. For example, in the outline in the "Rhetorical Patterns" section, the most important piece of information would be the statement of the opinion. The next most important pieces of information would be the reasons for the opinion, and the least important pieces of information would be the explanations of the reasons. Showing students outlines of texts, giving them exercises with some of the lines of the outline left blank, and having students outline texts are all useful in helping students understand the relative importance of various types of information.

Geva (1983) studied the use of flowcharts to facilitate reading comprehension, and they also appear to be useful in making students aware of the relationships among pieces of information in a text. A flowchart diagrams the relationships among ideas presented in the text. Concepts from the texts are written in the flowchart, connected by different types of lines that indicate the relationships among the context. These relationships include elaboration, cause/effect, example, and detail. Geva found that using this method increased the reading comprehension of native English speakers, particularly less skilled readers. It was felt that because skilled readers already mentally used a version of flowcharting, doing flowcharting on paper had less effect on their comprehension. Part of the difficulty experienced by less skilled readers, on the other hand, may be that they have difficulty making connections among different pieces of information in the text, so the practice of flowcharting would facilitate their comprehension. Though this technique has not, to my knowledge, been studied with second language readers, I think that Japanese second/foreign language students would probably benefit from this technique.

With the recent interest and research in schema theory, there is support for the idea of prereading exercises that activate students' content schemata for the topic of the text (Hudson, 1982). In addition to making predictions about the topic based on the title and headings, looking at any illustrations or diagrams, reading the first paragraph and/or the first lines of each paragraph (Mikulecky, 1985), students can also make predictions about how the text or individual paragraphs are going to be organized. Though I do not know of any studies that incorporate making predictions about the rhetorical organization, it seems that it would help prepare Japanese students to make use of their knowledge about organization.

In addition to making students aware of common types of rhetorical patterns, teachers can point out the introduction, discussion, and conclusion that typically appear in essays or paragraphs and also topic sentences of paragraphs. Students can practice identifying these parts of the text or paragraph with different types of rhetorical organization. In my experience, this also helps students understand the relative importance of information and the role it plays in the text. In addition, if composition is taught along with reading, students can make their understanding of introductions, discussions, and conclusions more concrete by using them in writing texts or paragraphs.

Transitions. Helping students understand the use of transitions is also useful in improving reading comprehension. Though Japanese students may know, for example, what "therefore" means, they may not necessarily be aware that its use indicates that what follows it is the effect of what came before it. An understanding of transitions should help readers read more efficiently, because it helps them know what to expect and helps them understand relationships among pieces of information.

Williams (1983) suggested teaching students about transitions by having them read a text and identify the types of transitions that they find. He recommended developing a system of symbols and abbreviations for types of transitions. He also recommended that students begin with texts on which the transitions and their types are marked, so that they have an opportunity to see examples of different types and how they function. In the next step, Williams suggested that transitions could be marked, for example with a dot, and students could be asked to identify the type of transition. Last, students could be presented with a text in which they would be asked to both identify the transitions and their types.

Another useful activity would be to give students texts with blanks for the transitions and ask them to fill in the blanks with appropriate transitions. This activity is helpful in that it gives students a deeper understanding of the functions of transitions. Also, it helps make the students aware of which transitions may be appropriate in which contexts. For example, Japanese students have a tendency to start sentences with the transitions "and," "so," or "but," which is usually not appropriate. In the initial position of a sentence, the reader is more likely to find "in addition" or "also," "therefore," and "however." Depending on the proficiency of the students, the teacher may wish to do this type of exercise first in a multiple choice format.

Another activity that is useful in helping students understand the function of transitions is to give them texts with the sentences or phrases following transitions left blank and ask students to fill in the blanks. (Obviously, the texts for this activity should be on subjects on which students have well-developed background knowledge.) As with the previous type of activity, if the students' proficiency is not high, the teacher may wish to first present the exercise in a multiple choice format. The students should use the transition and the information that came before it to predict what sort of information would be likely to follow the transition. Students will not necessarily be exactly right about the information that follows the transition. The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to make predictions about what is coming, based on the context and on the transition. The purpose of such predictions is to make reading more efficient.

Conclusion

There remains much research to be done on the subject of schema theory and second language reading. More research is necessary both in the area of second/foreign language readers' use of textual schemata and particularly in the area of the classroom application of theory.

Much of the previous research on textual schemata and second/foreign language readers has been done in English-speaking countries on groups with mixed native languages. As a result, not much is known about the specific problems of Japanese speakers. Also, since the participants in studies in English-speaking countries are often doing academic work or preparing for it, they usually have high English proficiency compared to the average Japanese student. Language teachers and materials developers in Japan would find it useful to have the results of studies done on Japanese learners and on learners of lower levels of proficiency related to the rhetorical patterns and transitions that are difficult for Japanese students. They could also use information about how Japanese students and learners of lower levels of proficiency can best learn about the patterns that they need help with.

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3. Reading Strategies in Second/Foreign Language Teaching

Abstract

Reading strategies are mental operations that readers use when they approach a text and try to make sense out of it. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in reading strategies, in particular in what good readers do that works well and whether poor readers can be taught to use the strategies that help good readers read effectively. This involves teaching students what reading strategies are and how they can be applied to a written text.

Reading strategies that have been identified include prereading activities such as surveying the material before reading or activating knowledge related to the topic; skimming; scanning; finding the main idea of a paragraph or passage; identifying the rhetorical pattern of a passage or paragraph; outlining; recognizing transitions, which are words that indicate what kind of information follows or how two pieces of information are connected; and monitoring comprehension.

In this paper, I look at some of the research into the use of reading strategies, what reading strategies can be usefully taught, and make some suggestions for how specific reading strategies might be taught.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the reading strategies used by second/foreign language readers and how or whether these can be taught in order to improve reading comprehension. Research in this area suggests that less proficient readers are able to improve their reading comprehension by learning to use the strategies applied by more proficient readers (Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto, 1989). These studies are related to the concept of metacognition — literally, cognition about cognition, or thinking about the ways in which we think. As it applies to reading, metacognition involves the interaction between the reader and the text and how the reader manages the incoming information in order to comprehend it. The basis of studies on reading and metacognition is that if students of English are taught useful reading strategies and are taught to consciously think about the strategies that they use when reading, they will read better and more efficiently.

In the context of teaching reading, metacognition refers to two things — first, knowledge of what reading strategies there are, and second, during the process of reading, choosing appropriate reading strategies for a particular text (Brown, Armbruster, and Baker, 1986). When a reader exercises metacognitive control, the reader more or less consciously directs the choosing of these reading strategies. While research in the use of reading strategies by first language readers has produced positive results, the use of reading strategies by second/foreign language readers has only been studied in relatively recent years, though there is a growing interest in it (Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto, 1989).

In this paper, I am going to look at some of the research into the use of reading strategies, what reading strategies can be usefully taught, and make some suggestions for how reading strategies might be taught.

Reading Strategies

Reading strategies have been defined as "the mental operations involved when readers approach a text effectively and make sense of what they read" (Barnett, 1988: 150). Some examples of such reading strategies are guessing word meanings from context, skimming, scanning, predicting, activating general knowledge, and identifying referents.

It is logical, as Barnett (1988) suggests, to divide reading strategies into two categories: text-level strategies and word-level strategies. Text-level strategies are those which readers use in trying to understand the entire passage or large parts of it. These include using background knowledge, surveying the text and making predictions about what it will be about, skimming, and looking for the organization of a paragraph or passage. Word-level strategies, on the other hand, are strategies that involve individual words or phrases. Examples of these strategies are guessing the meaning of a word from context and understanding the meaning of a word through recognizing word families.

Reading Strategies in L1 and L2

The relationship between the use of reading strategies in the reader's first and second language is as yet unclear. It appears that readers who do not have effective reading strategies in their first language do not use reading strategies effectively in their second language. However, low reading proficiency in the second language can "short circuit," to use Hudson's (1982) term, the use of effective reading strategies (Barnett, 1988), so having effective reading strategies in the first language is not a guarantee that they can be applied in the second language. In fact, the results of some studies indicate that there is little transfer between the native language and a second language when it comes to reading strategies, even for students who use the strategies effectively in their native languages (Hosenfeld, Arnold, Kirchofer, Laciura, and Wilson, 1981). Kern (1989), in contrast, found that reading strategy training benefited the least proficient students most (though students at all levels in his experimental group showed significantly more improvement than the students in the control group), suggesting that the intermediate and advanced group already used reading strategies from their native language to some extent.

Hosenfeld, Arnold, Kirchofer, Laciura, and Wilson (1981) emphasize the use of students' knowledge of the reading strategies that they use in their native language in teaching them to use reading strategies in a second language. They recommend a sequence of activities in which the teacher has the students read a passage in their native language, paying attention to how they apply the strategy. The teacher then identifies the strategies students are using and leads a discussion, helping the students understand what strategies they are using and which ones are effective or ineffective. The next step is to lead the students through the use of the strategy in the second language, using a reading passage on a transparency, pointing out the relationships between the first and second language strategies. Finally, the teacher provides additional instruction in that reading strategy and gives the students practice. The authors believe that using the students' knowledge of reading strategies in their own language helps them apply these strategies to the second language.

Studies on the Use of Strategies in a Second Language

Barnett (1988) found that native English speakers reading French had better comprehension if they used reading strategies considered effective, particularly those related to paying attention to the context. The results of Barnett's study also indicated that students who make use of context as a reading strategy were more aware of the strategies that they used and had better reading comprehension.

Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1988) studied training in two specific strategies, semantic mapping (making a diagram of words related to a key concept) and the experience-text-relationship method (having readers think about and discuss their previous knowledge or experience related to the topic, reading the text, and connecting the previous knowledge or experience with the text). (Both of these methods are explained in more detail below.) They found that students who had been trained in these methods showed more improvement in comprehension than students who had not received any training on short-answer questions that required some depth of understanding of the text. No such difference was evident on multiple choice questions, bringing into question the sensitivity of multiple choice questions in measuring improved reading comprehension as a result of using reading strategies.

Kern (1989) studied the teaching of reading strategies to native English speakers reading French. In his experimental group, students received training in reading strategies at the word, sentence, and rhetorical level for one semester integrated with their normal reading course. The control group covered the same material, but without reading strategies training. The study included beginning, intermediate, and advanced students. Kern's results indicated that on all levels, students who had received instruction in reading strategies showed significantly greater improvement in reading proficiency.

In contrast, Kimura, Masuhara, Fukada, and Takeuchi (1993) reported on a study of teaching reading strategies to Japanese students of English. They had an experimental group, which received direct and explicit training in reading strategies for eight weeks, and a control group, which received supplementary reading/translation exercises during the time that the students in the experimental group were receiving strategy training. Results indicated that there was no difference between the two groups. They offered several explanations for the lack of effect of the reading strategies training, including that insufficient time allowed for teaching the reading strategies, making the training and practice superficial; lack of opportunity for extensive reading; the difficulty of teaching reading strategies; the short duration of the study, etc.

On balance, research does support the usefulness of the teaching of reading strategies to second language learners. More research is necessary, however, on various aspects of the teaching of reading strategies, including what methods are best, at what levels they should be taught, what the best balance is between teaching reading strategies and extensive reading, etc.

Japanese Students' Difficulties in Reading English

Japanese students of English have a number of difficulties reading English, many of which are related to either to lack of familiarity with effective reading strategies or use of ineffective reading strategies. In general, Japanese students understand information that comes directly from the text, but they have difficulty making inferences. They have difficulty with unknown words. They do not do well in reading literary forms other than essays, such as newspaper articles, poetry, or directions (Kitao, K., in press). In addition, in my experience, Japanese students are not familiar with the conventional rhetorical patterns of English. They do not know how to guess the meanings of words from context and tend to stop every time they encounter an unfamiliar word and look it up in a bilingual dictionary. They do not know how to vary their reading strategies or reading speed, based on the purpose of their reading. Japanese students treat every sentence in a reading passage as having the same importance and have difficulty finding the main idea of the passage and understanding the relationships of details to that main idea. They tend to read a passage through from the beginning to the end, without surveying the reading beforehand, making predictions based on the title, illustrations, etc. The teaching of reading strategies could address many of these problems.

Relationship of Teaching Reading Strategies and Other Methods

One of the important issues in the teaching of second/foreign language reading and in the decisions that a reading teacher has to make is to find balance among various approaches. While teaching reading strategies appears to be fruitful, they should not be taught to the exclusion of the experience of extensive reading, which is also important to the development of reading proficiency (Smith, 1982). Developing students' vocabulary, their knowledge of grammatical patterns, and so on, can support their use of reading strategies (Williams, 1986). In addition, the teaching of content is also a growing concern. When teaching reading strategies, it is also necessary for the teacher to be concerned about teaching some content area, such as other cultures. Strategies in and of themselves are not necessarily very interesting and so students are likely to be more motivated if the materials that they are reading are on a topic that they are interested in. Therefore, in advocating the teaching of reading strategies, I am not suggesting that the teaching of content, vocabulary and grammar, or extensive reading be neglected.

Inductive and deductive methods. Methods of teaching reading can be divided into two categories — inductive and deductive methods. Deductive methods involve teaching students directly how to read, that is, teaching them specific skills or strategies. Inductive methods involve having students read, with varying amounts of guidance, and expecting that, through the experience of reading, they will develop reading skills and strategies. While the latter may seem ideal — it is the way that most readers learn to read in their native language — it takes a relatively large amount of time. Students should still learn to read, in part, by reading. However, some teaching of reading strategies does appear, in some cases, to help improve students' comprehension. In addition, some of the knowledge necessary for applying strategies is unique to the target language. For example, the paragraph organization of English is different from that in Japanese, so it is useful to teach Japanese students about paragraph organization so that they can apply the strategy of making use of the organization to help them understand the paragraph.

Developing Specific Reading Strategies

Various reading strategies have been proposed and studied. Some, such as pre-reading activities and use of textual schemata, have been the subject of a number of studies. Others have been suggested but have yet to be studied in detail.

If a teacher decides to teach reading strategies in a reading class, there are various alternatives. There are textbooks for second/foreign language learners that teach reading strategies (e.g., Kimmelman, Martin, Krantz and Seltzer, 1984; Zukowski/Faust, Johnson, and Atkinson, 1983; Suzuki, Rost, and Baxter, 1987; Prashker, 1993; Neufeld and Webb, 1984; Ramsay, 1986; Kirn and Hartmann, 1990; and Kitao and Kitao, 1994). However, it is also possible for a teacher to develop exercises to teach reading strategies. These exercises can be based on reading passages in a textbook that the teacher is already using, or the teacher can make supplemental materials by choosing other reading passages to make exercises for. In this section, I will discuss some of the strategies that are believed to improve reading comprehension and research related to them and suggest some exercises or activities that can be developed to teach them.

Some General Guidelines

When teaching reading strategies, it is a good idea to start by introducing the strategy, perhaps with some examples, and then give students a short exercise to allow them to practice the strategy. This helps the students understand what the strategy involves and how it is applied. Then students can apply it to a longer reading passage.

When teaching about reading strategies, the texts that are chosen should be relatively easy for students. If the text is too difficult, students' ability to apply the reading strategy is interfered with, because they are just trying to get meaning from the text.

It is also useful to review a reading strategy after it has been introduced. For example, if the teacher has introduced a particular reading strategy, a few weeks later, if students are reading an appropriate reading passage, the teacher can give them an exercise that involves using the same reading strategy. It should be emphasized to students that reading strategies are not just something they learn to do once and then never use again; individual reading strategies should be recalled and applied whenever they are appropriate.

Pre-Reading Activities

Various studies have shown that pre-reading activities result in better reading comprehension, especially if those activities are designed to activate students' background knowledge and elicit their predictions about what will be in the reading passage (for example, Taglieber, Johnson, and Yarbrough, 1988; Hudson, 1982; Akagawa, 1992) There are a number of types of activities that teachers can use to help prepare students before they start reading.

Surveying the material. Before reading, students should be taught to look over the material that they are going to read. Depending on the particular passage they can look at the title and the headings; pictures; words in italics or bold face type; questions that follow the reading passage; graphs, charts, etc.; the first sentence of each paragraph; and the first and last paragraphs. (Ascher [1993] even suggests copying the reading, cutting these items out, and arranging them on a separate piece of paper for students to use in this exercise.) This can be done in combination with various activities. For example, students can be given a list of topics and asked to check off those that they think might be found in the passage, based on their survey of the passage. If they are advanced enough, they can generate questions which might be answered by the text or a list of topics that they think will be covered by the reading.

Bostwick (1989) suggests a series of steps in which students look over the passage briefly, write down a one-sentence statement of what they think the passage will be about, share their statements with other students in a small group, along with what they based their predictions on, and discuss the predictions as a class. Bostwick also suggests asking students to generate questions in advance related to what the writer's motivation is for writing the passage, the relationship between this passage and previously read passages, and other such questions which require the students to think globally about the passage. Even if the students cannot answer these questions initially, such questions encourage students to consider the passage as a whole and not be too tied to the details of the passage.

Surveying a reading passage and looking at the title, headings, pictures, etc., and then making predictions about what the reading is likely to be about is an activity that students should be taught to do whenever they read a passage, whether or not they have been specifically instructed to do so by the teacher. This is something that they can do independently to improve their reading comprehension.

Another way to activate background knowledge is to use questions to elicit what students already know about the topic. This can be done in the form of general questions (What do you know about. . .) or true/false or short answer questions that at least some students are likely to know the answer to. This can be done as an individual, group, or class activity. Using what they know about the topic, students might also generate questions that they would like the answers to.

Making predictions. In addition to making predictions about the content of the reading before beginning, students can be interrupted during the reading and asked to make predictions about what will come next. They can, for example, be given only half the reading passage or paragraph and after reading that far be asked to predict what the author will conclude, how the story will end, etc. Students may be given a list of predictions to choose from at first and later produce their own predictions (Tay, 1979). This helps motivate and focus students in their reading (Edge, 1979).

Using students' experiences and knowledge. Background knowledge can also be activated by having students discuss their own experiences related to the topic. In the case of a reading passage about another culture, students can discuss a similar custom in their own culture. For example, before a reading about American wedding customs, the teacher can lead a discussion about Japanese wedding customs, with particular emphasis on the customs that are similar to or different from those described in the passage, or have the students discuss these customs in groups, perhaps with the guidance of questions from the teacher.

A procedure for using students' own experience has been formalized by Barnitz (1985) in the experience-text-relationship (ETR) method. In this method, the teacher first draws out the students' experiences or background knowledge related to the reading passage they will be covering. Next, the students read the passage, with the teacher checking their comprehension periodically. Finally, the teacher leads a discussion about the relationship between the students' experiences or knowledge and what they read in the passage. A requirement of this method is that the teacher be adept at leading the students to finding the answers themselves rather than giving them the answers.

Values clarification. In the case of a reading that involves an opinion, some controversy, etc., doing a values clarification before reading the passage is useful (Bostwick, 1989). To prepare students for such a reading, the teacher can ask questions related to the issue in the reading. Done in advance of reading the passage, these help introduce the issues presented. Values clarification questions can take various forms. For example:

1. Circle the number that represents your opinion.

A woman's greatest happiness is in getting married and having children.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly disagree

2. List three characteristics that you value in a friend.
3. What I like most about school is __________
   What I dislike most about school is __________
4. Rank the following according to how important you think they are to a satisfying life:

   _____ friendship _____ romantic love
   _____ satisfying work or study _____ family relationships
   _____ money _____ natural surroundings _____ sports

Vocabulary. It is not entirely clear how useful it is to present vocabulary before the reading. While vocabulary knowledge in general is associated with reading comprehension, pre-teaching vocabulary seems to have a limited effect on comprehension of a particular passage (Nagy and Herman, 1987; Freebody and Anderson, 1983). It appears to depend, to some extent, on how the new vocabulary is presented. Hudson (1982) found that presenting difficult vocabulary and definitions before students read the passage did not have a significant effect on their reading comprehension. Taglieber, Johnson, and Yarbrough (1988) used an activity in which students were presented with the vocabulary words in a context unrelated to the reading passage and were asked to try to figure out the meaning of the words from the context. While this treatment was found to be more effective than no treatment, it was not as effective as two other activities specifically designed to activate background knowledge. It may be that vocabulary activities that are aimed more toward activating background knowledge would be more useful as prereading activities. ("Semantic mapping" below is an example of such an activity. See also "Content Schemata and Second Language Learning" in this volume for a discussion of such activities.)

Skimming and Scanning

It is important for readers to vary the way that they read according to the purpose of their reading. When reading a passage in which they need to understand the details, readers read relatively slowly, but in other cases, readers need to find information quickly. In such cases they read very quickly. Two skills which involve reading quickly are skimming and scanning.

Skimming is looking a reading passage over quickly to get general information. Readers use skimming, for example, to find out what a reading passage is about in order to see whether they want to read it. When skimming, the reader looks for the answers to questions such as "What is this about?" and "What kind of information does this include?"

Scanning involves looking quickly for specific information. It is useful when, for example, reading a television schedule to find out what time the news starts, or reading an encyclopedia entry to find out what year George III became king.

There are various activities that can help students develop the skills of skimming and scanning. When doing such activities, it is very important to press students to read quickly. This can be done by setting a time limit or having students compete to see who finishes the activity first.

Skimming. Activities to develop the ability to skim are those in which the students look over a reading quickly to identify overall information. One way to work on this is to give students several different types of readings or short excerpts from different types of readings (a letter, a diary entry, a short story, instructions, etc.), and have them quickly identify each of the reading passages or match the reading passage with a list of types of readings. Another way is to have students match a list of titles to the paragraphs in a reading.

Scanning. Scanning can be developed by asking students to look for specific pieces of information quickly. Particularly when students first do such activities, it is useful to use something very obvious, such as dates or names. For example, in a reading passage about history, the students could be asked to find the years in which certain events took place. This is a relatively easy activity, since years are easy to find in the text. Questions can also be asked about names, places, or other proper nouns, since capitalized words are also easy to find. Later other questions can be asked, but the information needed to answer the questions should come directly from the text, and students should not have to put together information from different places in order to answer the questions.

Finding the Main Idea

One of the most basic reading skills is finding the main idea (Tay, 1979). For some types of reading, it is sufficient by itself. In any case, it is difficult to say that a reader understands a reading passage if that reader does not know what the main idea is. Being able to separate important from unimportant ideas is one of the distinguishing characteristics of good readers. According to research by Eamon (1978-1979), good and poor readers recall approximately the same amount of material from a reading passage, but the good readers recall more of the important information, while poor readers recall both important and unimportant information. This indicates that an important characteristic of good readers is that they can distinguish the important information in a reading passage.

Materials for teaching reading can often focus on details almost to the exclusion of the main idea. Tay (1979) quotes an example of a reading passage in which the following sentences appear: "Bob was sitting on the bank fishing. A pail for the fish he was not catching was at his left side." The question about these sentences was, "Where was the pail for the fish?" This question, by focusing on this detail, entirely misses the point. It is very important to develop exercises that help students learn to pick out the main idea of a paragraph or passage.

Tay (1979) suggests a number of activities that can be used to help students learn to find the main idea. They include:

1. Selecting the topic sentence of a paragraph and noting where such sentences are usually found.
2. Selecting from a list of sentences or titles the one that expresses the main idea of a paragraph.
3. Stating the main idea of a paragraph or suggesting a title.
4. Finding the main idea of a reading passage in the introductory and/or summary paragraphs.
5. Noting words such as "most important" or "in summary" which may indicate the expression of the main idea.

The following example from Kitao and Kitao (1994) is an illustration of a paragraph for which students are asked to choose the sen-

tence which expresses the main idea. Note that the incorrect alternatives involve information from the paragraph; they are just not the main idea.

Read the paragraph and then the sentences below. One of the sentences expresses the main idea of the reading. Put an "X" in the blank beside it.

The Canals and Rivers of Thailand

[1]The canals and rivers of Thailand are very important to that country in a variety of ways. [2]One of their most important functions is transportation. [3]Within the city of Bangkok, canals were once a very important way of getting around. [4]In fact, Bangkok was called the "Venice of Asia" because of its many canals. [5]Though they are not used as much for urban transportation anymore, you can still see the canals in various places around Bangkok. [6]On the central plain of Thailand, rivers are still important for transportation. [7]There are "water buses" and barges on these rivers. [8]Individual people also own boats to get around on the rivers. [9]In fact, many houses are built along rivers, and the people who live in them have boats tied up in front of their houses. [10]They use the rivers like city streets. [11]Rivers are used for transportation between northern Thailand and the capital. [12]For example, trees cut in the northern part of Thailand are floated down rivers to Bangkok. [13]In addition, "floating markets" are common. [14]In floating markets, many boats come up to the bank of a river, and customers can buy goods or food directly from the boat. [15]These examples demonstrate the importance that Thailand's canals and rivers have to that country.

1. Because of its many canals, Bangkok is called the "Venice of Asia."
2. Some individuals in Thailand have houses built along rivers or canals, which they use like city streets.

X 3. The canals and rivers of Thailand are important to the country.

Textual Schemata

One reading strategy that has been studied is the use of textual schemata, background knowledge about conventional ways that texts are organized. Research has indicated that application of this knowledge can be used to improve reading comprehension (Mandler, 1978; Meyer, 1975; Meyer and Rice, 1982; and Carrell, 1984a, 1984b).

Teaching parts of paragraphs/essays. One component of textual schemata is the knowledge of how paragraphs are conventionally organized in English. Understanding the organization of paragraphs can help readers because it helps them identify the most important information in the paragraph, a critical part of comprehension.

According to Meyer and Rice (1982), proficient readers identify the organization of a paragraph or longer text through cues in the title or introduction or by searching for an organizational framework that fits what they are reading. Having identified the pattern, readers interpret new information in the light of that organization. Because these patterns are hierarchical, this strategy also provides information about the relative importance of new information. Identifying a conventional pattern, according to Meyer and Rice, allows the reader to concentrate on the content.

In addition, paragraphs are a microcosm of longer passages. The conventional organization of longer reading passages has similar parts and similar organization to individual paragraphs.

It is helpful for readers to understand the organization of paragraphs and the types of paragraphs that are typically used in English. Paragraphs are the basic unit of written English. Conventionally, paragraphs have an introduction, discussion, and conclusion. In the introduction, the writer specifies the topic; in the discussion, the writer elaborates on the topic specified in the introduction; and in the conclusion, the writer may summarize the information, reiterate the main point, draw a conclusion from evidence offered in the discussion, etc.

There are also various types of paragraphs, and it is useful for students to be able to recognize these. These include illustration (a general statement with one or more examples), cause and effect (a cause and its effects or an effect and its causes), problem/solution, comparison/contrast, personal opinion, description, narrative, classification (dividing people objects, etc., into categories), analysis (dividing something into regions, sections, etc.), and instructions. (See Kitao and Kitao [1990] or "Teaching Rhetorical Patterns and Transitions" in this volume for a more complete discussion of parts of paragraphs and types of paragraphs.)

To teach about the parts of paragraphs, the teacher explains the parts and shows examples, and then gives the students paragraphs in which they identify the introduction, discussion, and conclusion. For example (from Kitao and Kitao [1990]):

The Cactus

[1]The cactus is a desert plant that comes in many different varieties. [2]Cacti have adapted in various ways to living in the desert. [3]They have the ability to gather and store water. [4]Their long roots allow them to gather water from deep underground. [5]Their flesh can store a lot of water. [6]Having needles rather than leaves also helps them conserve water. [7]Water cannot escape through needles as it would through leaves. [8]In addition, cacti are well protected from thirsty desert animals. [9]Their needles keep thirsty desert animals away, and their thick skin also protects them. [10]If it were not for these characteristics, cacti would not be able to live in the desert.

Analysis Questions

1. 1-2 : sentence(s) in the introduction
2. 3-9 : sentence(s) in the discussion
3. 10 : sentence(s) in the conclusion

Teaching patterns of paragraphs. Exercises can be used to introduce the concepts involved in these patterns of paragraphs. Their purpose is to get students started thinking about the idea behind the pattern in a way that does not require them to understand a paragraph or longer passage in English, since these patterns are probably not entirely foreign to students (though some patterns may be less commonly used in certain cultures). For example, to introduce comparison/contrast, the teacher can give students pairs of words or phrases (e.g., the United States and Japan; baseball and sumo; plays and movies) and ask them to list similarities and differences between them. To introduce the problem/solution pattern, students can be given a problem (You want to go to Australia, but you don't have enough money) and be asked to generate solutions. Such exercises do not really introduce new concepts. To introduce classification, the teacher can give the students a list of words and ask the students to put the words into categories. The teacher may choose the words with certain categories in mind or may choose the words randomly and let the students come up with categories. In either case, the students can explain their categories, come up with additional words for each category, etc. Such exercises help remind students of concepts they already know.

After using the above exercises, teachers can introduce the paragraph pattern and show students models. After introducing three or four patterns, the teacher can give the students several paragraphs and ask them to identify the patterns. The teacher can also give students a paragraph and, depending on the type of paragraph, ask questions that require students to find relationships among pieces of information related to that type. For example, if the paragraph is a comparison/contrast paragraph, the teacher can have the students identify where the similarities or differences are stated and where they are explained further. The following example (Kitao and Kitao, 1990) is a classification paragraph. Students are asked to find where the categories are specified and which sentences explain each category further.

The Governments of Western Europe

[1]Due to their different histories and cultures, the Western European countries have a variety of types of governments. [2]However, the governments can be divided into two types. [3]One type is a constitutional monarchy. [4]A constitutional monarchy is a government where there is a king or queen, but where the power of that king or queen is limited by the constitution. [5]Countries that are constitutional monarchies include Great Britain, Denmark, Holland, and Spain. [6]The other type of government is a republic. [7]A republic has a democratic government with a constitution. [8]Some republics in Western Europe are France, Greece, Ireland, and Germany.

Analysis Questions

1	1-2	sentence(s) in the introduction
2	3-8	sentence(s) in the discussion
3	none	sentence(s) in the conclusion
4	3,6	sentences that specify the categories
5	4-5	sentences that explain the first category
6	7-8	sentences that explain the second category

Holstein (1993) recommends having students indicate the introduction, discussion, and conclusion of the paragraph by drawing lines in the margin that block out the introduction, each major supporting idea, and the conclusion. This procedure, he suggests, indicates each of these parts of the paragraph in a concrete, tangible way.

Paragraphs and essays. As mentioned above, similar organization and patterns are found in essays. After teaching about paragraphs, the teacher can go on to longer reading passages. The teacher might want to demonstrate this by showing the students a paragraph that has been expanded into an essay. For example, in a comparison/contrast essay, each of the similarities or differences would be explained by two or three sentences in a paragraph, but in an essay, each similarity and difference could be explained by a paragraph or more.

Semantic mapping. Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto (1989) and others recommend the use of semantic mapping for teaching about text organization. (This procedure is also sometimes called "clustering" or "webbing.") Semantic mapping can be approached in different ways, depending on the goals of the class and of the specific assignment. It generally begins with a brainstorming session in which the teacher gives students a topic or key concept, and students come up with as many ideas as they can associated with that concept. (If the purpose of this activity is to help the students see the organization of the reading, the ideas that the students suggest come from the reading.) The teacher then facilitates a discussion among the students of how the ideas can be organized in relation to the key concept. This process can also be done individually or through group discussion. Semantic mapping as a post-reading exercise helps students organize the information from the reading passage. As a prereading exercise, it can be used to activate background knowledge, teach new vocabulary, and/or to give the teacher an idea how much background knowledge and knowledge of the required vocabulary students have. The procedure can also be done both before and after the students read the passage (Carrell, Pharis, and Liberto, 1989).

Prereading. Once they have been introduced to various rhetorical patterns, students can, as a prereading exercise, survey the reading passage by looking at the title, pictures, first and last paragraphs, etc., and predict what kind of rhetoric structure it might have (Bame, 1993).

Outlining

Being able to outline a passage is a useful skill in some cases, because it helps readers see the relative importance of the pieces of information and how they fit together. While I do not know of any research on this point, I believe that one of the major difficulties that

Japanese students have when reading English is that they do not distinguish among pieces of information according to their relative importance — and this, too, is a vitally important aspect of reading comprehension (Tay, 1979). In an outline, students can see a graphic representation of the information from a paragraph or reading passage with the relative importance indicated. The title of an outline gives the main topic of the passage. The next most important pieces of information are next to Roman numerals, followed in order of importance by capital letters, Arabic numerals, lower-case letters, and small Roman numerals (i, ii, etc.).

The idea of outlining can be introduced by showing students an outline, preferably of a paragraph or a very short passage, and pointing out the correspondence between the passage and the outline, and how the relative importance of various pieces of information is indicated in the outline. After showing a complete outline, the teacher can give students an outline of another passage with blanks for some words and ask them to fill in the words, again discussing with them the correspondence between the passage and the outline and also the relative importance of the information. Blanks can be substituted for more and more words, until whole lines are blank, and more lines can be left blank, until the students are doing the outline independently. This series of exercises, from the original introduction of an outline to having students outline a passage independently, can be done in a series of classes over weeks or months, whenever an appropriate passage is available. To be appropriate for an outline, a passage has to be well organized.

The following is an example of a paragraph and an outline for it (Kitao and Kitao, 1993).

The Effects of Motor Vehicles

[1]The widespread use of motor vehicles has had a great effect on the daily lives of Americans. [2]Some of these effects have been good. [3]Motor vehicles allow Americans to be mobile. [4]Before they were

widely available, traveling even a few miles was difficult. [5]Today, traveling hundreds of miles is not unusual. [6]Motor vehicles also make more consumer goods available. [7]They allow raw materials to be transported to factories and finished goods to be transported to consumers all over the country. [8]Unfortunately, motor vehicles have also had some bad effects. [9]They have caused serious pollution problems in many cities. [10]In addition, many thousands of American die every year in accidents. [11]With these effects, motor vehicles have influenced the lives of all Americans.

The Effects of Motor Vehicles on Americans' Lives

I. Good effects
  A. Made Americans more mobile
    1. Before, traveling was difficult
    2. Today, can travel hundreds of miles
  B. Make consumer goods available
    1. Transporting raw materials to factories
    2. Transporting finished goods to consumers
II. Bad effects
  A. Cause serious pollution problems
  B. Many Americans die in accidents

Transitions

A transition (also called a logical connector) is a word or phrase that indicates what kind of information follows or how pieces of information are related. They include such words as "therefore," which indicates a consequence, "however," which introduces contrasting information, and "in other words," which indicates a restatement of what has come before.

Williams (1983) compared transitions to signposts on a road. Just as signposts inform a driver that the road will be curving or dividing, a transition tells the reader that what is coming is different from what might be expected (contrasting information), that it is stronger that what came previously (intensified information), that it is an example of what came previously, etc.

In my experience, while Japanese students know that the Japanese translation of "therefore" is "*dakara*," they are not necessarily conscious of the fact that what follows "therefore" will be the consequence of what came before. If being able to anticipate what is coming up is an important part of effective reading, as Smith (1982) and others contend, then students are neglecting an important source of information that would help them anticipate the direction that the reading passage is going, just as a driver who did not watch signposts would be neglecting an important source of information about what to expect on the road.

There are a variety of typologies for transitions (e.g., Robinson and Modrey, 1986; Rosa and Eschholz, 1992; Pichaske, 1975; Sebranek, Kemper, & Meyer, 1987). One common way of categorizing transitions is by the type of information that they introduce or the type of relationship that they specify.

The following is one useful typology of transitions, indicating the type of transition and examples of each.

Transitions	Examples
Additional Information	and, furthermore, moreover, in addition, also, too
Expected Information	of course, naturally, as you (may) know, obviously
Unexpected Information	amazingly, surprisingly
Intensified Information	in fact, as a matter of fact
Restatements	in other words, i.e., that is, in short
Examples	for example, for instance, to illustrate, such as, including, include
Consequences	so, and so, therefore, as a result, consequently, (in) consequence, as a consequence

Causes	because (of), due to, as a result (of), on account of, thanks to
Contrasting Information	however, but, although, (even) though, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand
Order	first, second, etc., then, next, last, finally
Conclusion	in short, therefore, to conclude, in conclusion to summarize, in summary

Teaching about transitions can begin with introducing ideas about relationships between pieces of information. For example, the teacher could give students two sentences and have them decide whether the second sentence is the cause, an example, or a restatement of the first sentence. The teacher could then introduce the English words that are used to indicate that relationship. This procedure could be used to introduce a few types of transitions in each class. After being introduced to transitions, students could write sentences using them.

Once students have learned different types of transitions, a series of exercises can be used to help them understand transitions better (Kitao, 1993). First, students are given a reading with the transitions marked and asked to identify their types. Next, students are given a reading with transitions and asked to find the transitions and identify their types. In the third level, students are given a reading with blanks for the transitions and they fill in the transition that they think belongs in the blank and explain why. (In some cases, there will be more than one type of transition that could logically fit in a blank.) Finally, students are given a reading with a blank for the sentence or part of a sentence that follows the transitions. (The reading used for this activity should be one for which students have some background knowledge.) Students are asked to guess what would be likely to be in the blanks. In this activity, it should be emphasized that what the students guess will not necessarily be exactly what the writer originally wrote. The purpose of this activity is to get students to anticipate what type of information they would expect after a certain transition in a certain context, and what some of the possibilities are.

This series of activities can be done with the textbook the students are already using, by photocopying the reading passage and whiting out words. Also, each activity can be repeated as often as the teacher feels is necessary before going on to the next level. Activities can also be returned to later for review. It is important the teacher use easy passages for such exercises. If the students are struggling to understand the meaning of the passage, it is difficult for them to think about the relationships among ideas, the meanings of transitions, etc.

Monitoring Comprehension

As students read, it is useful for them to monitor their comprehension by asking themselves questions. Mulling (1993) recommended helping students learn to do this by inserting questions about the important points in the text immediately after the paragraph where the answer to the question would be found. Mulling suggests such questions as "What kind of rhetorical pattern is this? How do you know?" "Does the author mention an argument against his/her position? How does the author deal with that argument?" "Is the author's opinion in this paragraph a fact, an opinion, or an informed judgment?" and "Why was apparently used here?" Mulling asserts that these are the kind of questions that students should ask themselves as they read, and this procedure will help students learn to do that.

Prichard and Van Vleet (1993) suggest that the teacher could teach students to use a think-aloud activity (similar to one that is sometimes used in research to study readers' strategies) to monitor their comprehension. In a research project on the reading strategies of ESL readers, Block (1986) found that students using think-alouds seemed to feel that using the process improved their comprehension, making them more aware of what they were doing and allowing them to teach themselves. Prichard and Van Vleet emphasize that modeling this procedure for students, in addition to telling them what to do, is the most effective way to teach it. The teacher chooses an appropriate reading passage, puts it on a transparency, and gives students paper copies of it. The teacher then reads the first paragraph or two, demonstrating the sorts of questions a reader might ask or conclusions a reader might draw. Prichard and Van Vleet (1993: 86) demonstrated the procedure using the following passage from Kirn and Hartmann (1990: 8):

> In many countries, such as France, Greece, and Japan, it is often more difficult for students to pass the college entrance exams than to do the course work when they are actually in college. [*How can that be true? Do I understand this correctly?*] and students who don't have much money are at a disadvantage. [*Why are these students at a disadvantage?*] Students prepare for these tests for years in advance. Often, students attend a private school at night (for instance, a *juku* in Japan or a *frontisirion* in Greece) [*So, I guess a juku and a frontisirion are examples of private schools*] to get ready for them. . . .

The teacher models the procedure a few times while students read along and mark the places where the teacher thinks aloud, and then students can try to do it independently. Other strategies that students can make use of in their think-alouds include predicting, using background knowledge, searching for connections in the text, and accepting ambiguities and reading on

Understanding Referents

Referents are words that other words (for example, pronouns) refer to. For example, in the sentence, "David studied hard for the test, so he did well on it," "he" refers to "David," and "it" refers to "the test." While these examples are fairly obvious, referents are not always so obvious, as they may be separated from the pronoun by a sentence or more. In addition, a pronoun might not really refer to anything (e.g., They say that this is the most beautiful view on this coastline) or may refer to an idea and not just one word (e.g., "If you want to take a day off, just tell me so.") If a reader does not understand what a pronoun refers to, it may be difficult to understand the meaning of that part of the passage.

In order to teach about referents, the teacher can give students sentences or sets of two or three sentences and ask students to find the referents of pronouns that are underlined. For example (Kitao and Kitao, 1994):

1. I really enjoyed my trip to Rome. I'd like to take you there someday.
2. Budapest is the capital of Hungary. It was formed from two different cities — Buda and Pest — which grew up on opposite banks of the Danube River. It flows between them, and they are connected by several bridges.

Understanding Synonyms

Writers often use more than one word to refer to the same thing. This is particularly true in English, where words tend to have many synonyms, and using a variety of words is considered good writing style. It is very important for readers to understand that two different words may refer to the same thing; if they cannot do so, they cannot understand the writer's meaning.

Students can learn about synonyms by seeing sentences and later longer passages with one of a pair of synonyms underlined. They are asked to look for the other synonym. For example, (Kitao and Kitao, 1994):

1. Keep your passport handy. It might be useful to have it available.

2. If there are difficulties, please see Mr. Raymond. He will be able to help you with any problems that come up.

Understanding Chronological Order

When reading a narrative, an anecdote, instructions, or anything else that depends on the order of events, it is necessary for the reader to understand the chronological order. When the reading passage is organized in chronological order, this is not difficult, but this is not always the case. In a cause and effect pattern, the effect might be explained first, followed by the causes. In that case, the chronological order is reversed.

Students should look for words and phrases that indicate chronological order. These include such words as "after," "before," "while," "next," "then," "afterward," "earlier," "later," "the previous (day, week, etc.)," "just as," "as soon as," "meanwhile," and "the next (day, week, etc.)."

Students can learn to pay attention to chronological order by looking at sentences or short passages and determining the order in which the events took place, or in what order the steps should be taken. This helps students learn to look for and understand indicators of chronological order and also helps them learn to pay attention to the logical order of a series of events, a skill that is important to the anticipation of what is coming, and to transitions that may indicate order (Riley, 1979). After practicing on sentences or short passages, they can try this with longer passages.

For example (Kitao and Kitao, 1994):

(A)

In 1982, Meryl Streep won the Oscar for best actress in *Sophie's Choice*. It was her second Oscar. She had won her first for best supporting actress in *Kramer vs. Kramer*.

2 1. Meryl Streep won an Oscar for best actress.
1 2. Meryl Streep won an Oscar for best supporting actress.

(B)

After you board an airplane and find your seat, the first thing you should do is locate the nearest exit. After you sit down, fasten your seat belt firmly but not too tightly. Before you even leave to catch your flight, you should dress for safety. You should wear flat shoes so you can walk easily and clothing that covers most of your body to protect against burns.

3 1. Board an airplane.
4 2. Find your seat.
5 3. Locate the nearest exit.
2 4. Leave to catch your flight.
1 5. Dress for safety.

The teacher can also make students more aware of cues to chronological order by cutting apart the sentences or paragraphs (depending on how long the story is) of a narrative in chronological order and asking students to put the sentences/paragraphs back into chronological order (Tay, 1979). As a variation of this activity which emphasizes listening comprehension, each student in a group can be given a paragraph or sentence, which they read aloud. The students in the group work together to decide what order the paragraphs should go in, and discuss their reasons (Day, 1993).

Conclusion

Teaching second/foreign language students to use reading strategies appears to be effective in improving their reading comprehension. In this paper, I have reviewed research on the teaching of such strategies and made suggestions about how they might be taught. However, more research is necessary on how to most effectively teach them, which strategies are most useful, and so on.

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4. Linguistic Pragmatics and English Language Education

Abstract

The traditional focus of linguistic study has been isolated phonemes, morphemes, words, and sentences. However, there are utterances in which listeners comprehend meaning that cannot be explained by the grammar and lexical meanings of utterances. Linguistic pragmatics is the study of the relationship between context and meaning, which is often able to explain meanings that grammar and lexical meaning cannot.

In this paper, I discuss some of the important theories of linguistic pragmatics, including Grice's Cooperative Principle and the maxims that support it, and Austin and Searle's speech acts. I also discuss the application of linguistic pragmatics for second/foreign language learners and suggest activities to help teach Japanese students, based on what has been learned about the influence of context on meaning.

The field of linguistic pragmatics has been defined in a wide variety of ways (Levinson, 1983). For the purpose of this paper, the definition I will use will be, "the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding" (Levinson, 1983: 21). This definition implies that understanding an utterance involves more than understanding the words and grammatical structures. Understanding also involves making inferences connecting what is said to what is mutually assumed or known or what has been said previously. Pragmatics is therefore essentially concerned with inference.

To give one example to illustrate this point, if a mother says to her son, "Did you do your homework and put away your books?" and he replies, "I put away my books," any native English speaker would understand that the son's reply means he didn't do his homework. In isolation, nothing in the grammar of "I put away my books," includes that meaning. Therefore, if all native speakers (NSs) understand this, there must be a system by which they understand the utterance. If there were no system, different hearers would understand the reply differently (personal communication, DeCarrico, J., July, 1984).

Linguistics and Pragmatics

The traditional focus of linguistics has been the study of isolated phonemes, morphemes, words, and sentences. Now most linguists agree, however, that grammatical knowledge is one of several factors in the comprehension process. Other factors include the physical setting, participants' background knowledge, and sociocultural assumptions (Gumperz, 1977). As Grice (1957) pointed out, what is meant by a particular sentence is not necessarily what a speaker (S) means by that sentence when it is spoken in a particular context. Grice differentiates between *sentence meaning* (what a sentence means in isolation) and *speaker meaning* (what S means by a sentence). To use an example from Clark and Lucy (1975), a sergeant who asks a private, "Do you see that cigarette butt there, soldier?" does not want an answer to that explicit question. He wants the cigarette butt picked up. A soldier who answered the literal question without following the implied order would be considered insolent, even though nothing in the literal meaning of the question includes an order to pick up the cigarette butt. The speaker meaning is something more than the sentence meaning.

Conversational implicature. Grice (1967, 1975) proposed the notion of conversational implicature that has become the basis for much of the work in pragmatics. *Conversational implicature* is what

Ss implicate (imply) in interaction. Conversational implicature is based on the *Cooperative Principle* and four maxims that support it. The Cooperative Principle states that, as a speaker, you should: "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975: 45).

The maxims which support the cooperative principle are:

Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation: Be relevant.

Manner: Be perspicuous; Avoid obscurity; Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity); Be orderly.

According to Grice (1967, 1975), this list is not exhaustive. Additional maxims, such as Be Polite, are also generally observed.

Grice distinguished between *violating* and *flouting* a maxim. Violating a maxim refers to failing to follow a maxim unintentionally and without any communicative intent, for example, giving irrelevant information due to a misunderstanding of a question. In such cases, S does not intend to communicate anything by not following the maxim. In contrast, flouting a maxim means failing to follow a maxim on purpose and with the intent to communicate something. Grice was not interested in violations of maxims; he was interested in how Ss use the flouting of maxims to communicate meaning.

In the previously cited example (Mother: Have you done your homework and put away your books? Son: I've put away my books), the mother is asking for certain information – whether her son has done his homework and put away his books. However, he does not follow the maxim of quantity. His reply is less informative than required and does not supply all of the information that she has asked for. Flouting the maxim of quantity by not giving sufficient information generally implicates negative information. Therefore, the mother understands that the son is communicating that he did not do his homework.

Speech acts. According to Richards (1980: 417), speech acts can be described as

> the things we actually do when we speak. When we engage in conversation, we perform such acts as giving reports, making statements, warning, promising, approving, suggesting, criticizing, requesting, and so on. A speech act can be defined as the minimal unit of speaking which can be said to have a function.

Austin (1962) and Searle (1979) distinguished between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. A *locutionary act* is the utterance; an *illocutionary act* is what S means by the utterance (similar to Grice's speaker meaning); a *perlocutionary act* is the effect that the utterance has on the hearer (H). As Fraser (1983: 30) expressed it, "When we use language, we characteristically do three things: 1) we say something; 2) we indicate how we intend the hearer to take what we have said; and 3) we have definite effects on the hearer as a result."

Another distinction made by speech act theorists is between direct and indirect speech acts. *A direct speech act* is an utterance in which the locutionary force and the illocutionary force are the same. An *indirect speech act* is one in which the illocutionary force includes some meaning in addition to the locutionary force. "Please close the door," would be a direct speech act, since the locutionary force and the illocutionary force are the same. If "Can you close the door?" is used as a request, it would be an indirect speech act. The locutionary force is a question about H's ability to close the door. However, S does not only want to know whether H has the ability to close the door. S is making a request that H close the door. This distinction is vital, because if H cannot make the distinction, he/she will not be able to comprehend an indirect speech act.

Three issues in comprehension. Even before dealing with the issue of the illocutionary force of a speech act, three other issues must be resolved in order to understand what S means: 1) the sense of the utterance; 2) the identity of the objects in the real world referred to by S; and 3) whether or not S was speaking literally or figuratively (Fraser, 1983).

The first issue involves ambiguity. A sentence may have more than one meaning, in purely grammatical terms, independent of its context. For example, the sentence, "The police stopped drinking at midnight," has at least two possible meanings. It can mean that the police stopped someone else from drinking at midnight, or it can mean that the police themselves stopped drinking at midnight. Part of determining the meaning of a particular utterance includes determining which particular semantic interpretation of the utterance S intended.

The second factor in understanding an utterance is the issue of what objects the referring terms refer to. For example, where is "there?" When is "then?" Who is "she?" In the sentence, "John and David had an argument, and he hit him," it is not clear whether John or David was the one who did the hitting. In other cases, the pronoun and the antecedent might be widely separated. Without being able to identify the antecedents of pronouns, H cannot understand the meaning of an utterance, even if any ambiguities in the utterance are resolved.

The third factor is the literal versus figurative use of language. If S is speaking figuratively, H's task involves the semantic interpretation of the linguistic expression. According to Fraser (1983), H assumes that the expression is intended literally unless there is evidence to the contrary.

The question is, how does H recognize whether S is speaking figuratively? Sometimes, S gives cues such as "At the risk of exaggerating. . . ," or "In a manner of speaking. . . ," to notify H that the utterance is intended figuratively. However, there are other ways that H can tell that the utterance is not intended literally. For example, some utterances are semantically anomalous, transparently false, or self-contradictory. H would recognize that the sentence "The future is now" contradicts itself and cannot be taken literally and therefore would search for a figurative meaning. Also, some expressions are, in their literal sense, too obvious to make expressing them necessary. For example, "No man is an island," and "I wasn't born yesterday," are so obvious in their literal sense that S would not use them literally, and again, H searches for a figurative meaning. In Grice's terms, if we assume that S is following the Cooperative Principle, he/she would not say things that are not true (maxim of quality) or not relevant (i.e., that are so obvious that it is not necessary to put them into words) (maxim or relation) or that give more information than is necessary (maxim of quantity). If S is flouting one of the maxims, H may assume a figurative meaning.

The inference process. Beyond the question of whether the utterance is intended literally or figuratively, is the question of whether the illocutionary force of an utterance is different from the locutionary force and, if so, what the illocutionary force is. To illustrate the process of inference involved, Searle (1975: 33) used the following example:

Student A: Let's go to the movies tonight.
Student B: I have to study for an exam.

Student A's utterance is a proposal in which the locutionary force and illocutionary force are the same (direct speech act), by virtue of the use the word "let's." That is, in most utterances "let's" indicates a proposal.

In contrast, Student B's utterance would be taken as a refusal, even though there is nothing in the locutionary force of "I have to. . ." that indicates a refusal in the same sense that "Let's. . ." indicates a proposal. For example, "I have to eat popcorn tonight," or

"I have to tie my shoes," would not indicate a refusal in the way that "let's" indicates a proposal.

Searle (1979: 34-35) described the steps that he believed that Student A would have to go through unconsciously to derive the illocution of the utterance from the locution.

> Step 1: I have made a proposal to Student B, and in response he has made a statement to the effect that he has to study for an exam (facts about the conversation).
>
> Step 2: I assume that Student B is cooperating in the conversation and that therefore his remark is intended to be relevant (the Cooperative Principle).
>
> Step 3: A relevant response must be one of acceptance, rejection, counterproposal, etc. (theory of speech acts).
>
> Step 4: But his literal utterance was not one of these, and so was not a relevant response (inference from Steps 1 and 3).
>
> Step 5: Therefore, he probably means more than he says. Assuming that his remark is relevant, illocutionary meaning must differ from locutionary meaning (inference from Steps 2 and 4). (Step 5 is a vital one. If B cannot recognize that locutionary and illocutionary force are different, he will not be able to make the inference.)
>
> Step 6: I know that studying for an exam normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening, and I know that going to the movies normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening (factual background information).
>
> Step 7: Therefore, he probably cannot go to the movies and study for an exam in one evening (inference from Step 6).
>
> Step 8: A preparatory condition on the acceptance of a proposal is the ability to perform the act predicated in the propositional content condition (theory of speech acts).
>
> Step 9: Therefore, I know that he has said something that has the consequence that he probably cannot consistently

accept the proposal (inference from Steps 1, 7, and 8).

Step 10: Therefore the illocutionary meaning of the utterance is probably to reject the proposal.

As Searle also points out, some indirect speech acts have become conventionalized. For example, if I wanted to ask someone to open the window, I might say, "Can you open the window?" The form "Can you. . . ?" has become a conventionalized request, though there are other situations where it would not be a request. For example, "Can you open the window?" might be used as a suggestion in a context where someone is complaining that a room is often stuffy or a request for information about a room.

The illocutionary force of these three uses of "Can you open the window?" would, according to Searle, be determined by H, using a series of inferences similar to the ones detailed for the reply to the proposal about going out to the movies. (Some theorists, however, believe that Hs comprehend conventionalized forms without having to go through this process of inference. Gibbs [1979] argued that when the illocutionary force is clear from context, the hearer is able to process the illocutionary force without resorting to first comprehending the locutionary force and going through the inference process. According to Gibbs, it is only if the conventional form is used for one of its less common functions [e.g., "Can you. . ." for making a suggestion rather than a request] that the inference process is used.)

Schema theory and pragmatic comprehension. Kasper (1984) used *schemata* to help explain pragmatic comprehension. Schemata are knowledge structures that tell what is essential, typical, and possible in different situations (van Dijk, 1977). They are organized hierarchically, from general and abstract (e.g., social norms and values) to specific (e.g., grammatical and semantic rules).

In comprehension, H may interpret data in two ways. One way to process information is to start with what S says and use that to activate lower-order schemata (i.e., knowledge of grammatical forms and meanings of words). Based on this understanding of what S said, H activates higher-order schemata about the overall speaker meaning and the situation. Because this method moves from lower-order to higher-order schemata, it is called *bottom-up processing*. On the other hand, H may start with the higher-order schemata and search for data to match them. This strategy is called *top-down processing*. In conventional situations, where there are strong expectations, H is more likely to use the top-down strategy, since there is a strong basis on which to choose the higher-order schemata. Ideally, there is an interaction between the two. In top-down processing, H misses many details and may have difficulty due to choosing an inappropriate schema; in bottom-up processing, H uses data inefficiently and will often not understand inferences and indirect speech acts because of an incomplete understanding of the context (Carrell, 1984). However, in a completely unfamiliar or ambiguous situation, H has no choice but to depend on lower-order information and use bottom-up processing. In such cases, H will have to rely on general knowledge, for example about actor/goal relationships, to make inferences about the situation which will help in decoding.

Schemata necessary for comprehension include knowledge of speech acts and discourse functions, conversational maxims related to politeness and appropriateness, conversational maxims related to the propositional content of discourse contributions (Grician maxims), and schemata that help H identify relevant context-determining factors.

Pragmatics and the Second Language Learner

Difficulties of second language speakers. It is widely recognized that learning a second language involves much more than being able to understand the sounds, grammar and vocabulary of the second language (Fraser, 1978). It also involves the ability to comprehend and use language in real communication situations, the ability to use what Hymes (1972) referred to as *rules of speaking*. However, there has been little theorizing or research on how nonnative speakers comprehend indirect speech acts in a second language (Kasper, 1984; Conrad, 1984).

Without proficiency with rules of speaking, nonnative speakers will be limited in their ability to communicate. Indirect speech acts have, in many cases, become so conventionalized that the idea of not recognizing their illocutionary force may seem ludicrous to native speakers. However, nonnative speakers do have difficulty with them, as with the Chinese dinner guest, who, when asked if she could reach the salt, replied, "Yes, my arms are long" (personal communication, J. DeCarrico, July, 1984). Similarly, NNSs may not recognize the rhetorical functions of certain forms. For example, Chinese speakers may not recognize that "Thank you for calling," or "It was nice talking to you," are markers that signal a desire to end the conversation (Yang, 1987), and a foreign student in New Zealand was embarrassed when he did not realize that the remark, "You must be tired" by his host was intended as a signal that he should go to bed, since his host and hostess themselves were tired (Holmes and Brown, 1976).

Erwin-Tripp (1976) states that much of what Hs must comprehend involves inference. The study of pragmatic comprehension in a second language can help language teachers understand some of the problems that students have in both comprehension and production.

Kasper (1984) found that nonnative speakers (NNSs) in their second language tended to rely too heavily on bottom-up processing, often taking utterances too literally. She also found that NNSs did not make use of devices that indicated the illocutionary force of an utterance. Richards (1980) agreed that nonfluent NNSs tended to pay too much attention to the surface meaning of utterances. He further speculated that this affects the language directed toward NNSs (foreigner talk) in that native speakers of a language use more explicit markers of illocutionary force in speaking to NNSs than in speaking to other native speakers.

In relation to production rather than reception, Fukushima and Iwata (1985) did a study comparing American native English speakers with advanced Japanese students of English in Japan making an invitation and two requests using a role play format. The researchers found that the Japanese participants, in comparison to the Americans, used more direct expressions and did not distinguish between situations where they could be direct and where politeness required indirectness. The researchers felt that the problem was that the Japanese participants were not able to manipulate the language proficiently, particularly in the area of having H make inferences, rather than that the participants were not aware that different situations require different levels of politeness.

Classroom application. While inference plays an important part in comprehension, it is not dealt with to any great extent in second language courses (Richards, 1980). Faerch and Kasper (1985) recommend that second language education include the pragmatic component of communicative competence as a teaching goal. They also recommend facilitating the activation of native language pragmatic knowledge to help second language speakers. While the relationships between pragmatic comprehension in various languages have not been investigated closely, pragmatic theorists believe that there is some overlap among the maxims in different cultures, though the applications may be different.

Richards (1980) pointed out that in language teaching, questions (especially yes/no questions) are for the most part treated as the adjacency pair request for information/answer, while a question may, in fact, have a different illocutionary force. For example, "Yes, they are," might be the grammatically correct second pair part for the question, "Are these apples fresh?" However, in some contexts, the first pair part may in fact be a request, in which case "I just bought them. Help yourself," would be the appropriate second pair part. Richards recommended that students should be made aware of the possibility of meanings that go beyond such surface meanings.

Holmes and Brown (1976) developed a course intended to help students with what they referred to as sociolinguistic competence, in which they included comprehending the illocutionary force of locutionary acts (which they referred to as "interpreting social meaning") as well as producing appropriate utterances. The basic assumption of their course was that

> the adolescent or adult second language learner is by no means sociolinguistically naive since he has already acquired the complex sociolinguistic system used in his native speech community. In learning how to use and interpret the sociolinguistic rules of English he must develop an awareness of areas where the sociolinguistic system of his native language differs from that of English and where 'misinterpretation and misanalysis' is most likely to occur. . . . Adult students bring to second language learning an ability to 'introspect which can be extremely valuable (Holmes and Brown, 1976: 424-425).

In the class, Holmes and Brown used a variety of activities, including matching situations with appropriate utterances, providing utterances for various situations, role playing situations, and trying to find implications behind utterances. In all the activities they used, they contrasted expressions in the students' own culture with those used in English. "Hence the learner's sociolinguistic competence in his native language can be regarded as an asset rather than a liability, in that it facilitates the contrastive analysis of different sociolinguistic systems in the classroom (Holmes and Brown, 1976: 426)."

The authors reported that as the course progressed, students became more aware of differences between locutionary and illocutionary force in their exchanges with native English speakers.

> One student reported that his flat-mates no longer had any reason to laugh at his tendency to take their remarks literally, since he was becoming increasingly sensitive to their function. He quoted as an example his interpretation of "Have you cut

> yourself?" as an expression of concern rather than a request for obvious confirmation, and proudly told us he had replied "Oh, it's only a scratch" (Holmes and Brown, 1976: 427).

Implications for Japanese ESL students. In my experience, I've found that students often seem to think that comprehending in English is something completely different from comprehending in Japanese. However, as Nelson (1984) observed, Grice's maxims appear to apply to Japanese as well as English, though the systems may be applied differently.

I have often found it useful, as Holmes and Brown (1976) advocate, to point out parallels (or try to get students to find them) between Japanese and English. This seems to help students realize that there are similarities between what they do in Japanese and what they should be doing when they try to understand English. It is not usually necessary or productive to, for example, explain Grice's maxims, except in a linguistics class. However, it is often useful to look at specific examples as they come up in class and point out how they are similar to Japanese.

For example, a question like "How are you doing?" at the beginning of a conversation is a standard form of greeting in English, and a standard answer is expected. However, in the middle of a conversation, it might be intended as a literal question, and a literal answer is expected. Students may not even realize that they do something similar in Japanese. For example, the question "*Dochira e* [Where are you going]?" is often used just as a greeting, and all that is expected is a standard response. However, in some situations, such as when the question is asked by the guard of a building, a literal answer is expected.

Using Japanese is also sometimes helpful to caution students against drawing parallels where there are none. For example, the literal translation of "*Dochira e*," "Where are you going?", is not used by Americans in English as a greeting, but only as a literal question. Americans who are not familiar with the function of this expression in Japanese may think that Japanese are being unduly inquisitive when they ask, "Where are you going?"

Another technique that I have found useful is having students contrast pairs of English sentences. For example, students might compare expressions like "You're careless about details sometimes," and "I'm afraid we're all careless about details sometimes," used in a conversation between a supervisor and an employee after the employee has made a mistake. The first expression is direct and is intended as a criticism of the employee's performance. The second expression is a generalization, but in this context, it is intended as a criticism of the employee's performance. Being able to see the contrast between these two expressions makes this point more clearly. The teacher can use this example to point out that in English, criticisms are often expressed through generalizations. It is a way of making the criticism more polite and less offensive, since it does not refer directly to the person being criticized. Recognizing this will help students both recognize criticism that is directed at them and make criticisms without being unnecessarily offensive.

Role playing and simulation are often recommended for practicing interaction in a second language. While I think that these techniques are useful for giving students practice comprehending and using indirect speech acts, Japanese students may lack the proficiency to improvise role plays or simulations, especially with the additional pressure of "performing" before the class. One way of getting around this in less proficient classes is to have students work together in pairs or groups to write out dialogues, based on situations assigned by the teacher. In addition, this allows the teacher a chance to walk around and make corrections of the dialogues before they are performed in front of the class. The teacher can also note types of mistakes or examples of wrong usage that occur frequently and discuss them in front of the whole class.

More proficient classes might be divided into groups, each of which is assigned a role in a dialogue. First, the groups are given an assignment. For example, one group might be assigned the role of a student who wants to borrow a valuable book from a professor. The group that they are paired with might be assigned the role of a professor who normally makes a policy of not lending books to students. After reading their assignments, the group members decide what expressions are necessary and appropriate and then a representative of each group participates in the role play. (They may consult their group, if necessary.) To provide contrasting situations, another pair of groups in the class might be assigned a similar situation with one element changed, such as borrowing a valuable book from a friend.

Conclusion

Further study is obviously needed in the area of linguistic pragmatics and second/foreign language learners. Researchers need to learn more about how language learners deal with both conventional and unconventional illocutionary acts in the target language. What is the effect of similarities and differences with the native language? Are students able to make use of similarities and differences in pragmatics in their own language when they use the target language? What are the best methods for teaching the pragmatic rules of the new language to students for the purpose of production? for the purpose of comprehension? Further research in these areas has the potential to improve foreign language teaching.

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5. Foreigner Talk, Foreigner Register, and Teacher Talk

Abstract

It is well documented that simplified speech is used by speakers for hearers who are perceived to have less-than full command of the language. Speech directed at babies, the hard of hearing, nonnative speakers is grammatically simplified and marked by such characteristics as the absence of certain morphological markers, the use of full forms rather than contractions, the use of one all-purpose form, and the use of devices to elicit feedback. Some of these characteristics result in ungrammatical utterances, and a distinction is made between such utterances (foreigner talk) and foreigner register, which is speech directed at nonnative speakers but which is grammatical.

In this paper, I discuss the characteristics of foreigner talk and foreigner register and how they differ from speech forms directed at native speakers. I discuss the strategies used to make speech more comprehensible to nonnative speakers, and the triggers that elicit foreigner talk or foreigner register, including both nonnative speaker and native speaker traits. I also discuss teacher talk, a type of foreigner talk directed at students by teachers, and the effects of teacher talk on the learning process.

Ferguson (1971) has suggested that all speech communities have varieties of simplified speech regarded as appropriate for use when hearers do not have a full command of the language. These include baby talk, ways of talking to people who are hard of hearing, and ways of speaking to nonnative speakers of the language who are judged deficient in language proficiency. Simplified codes are, in general, conventionalized within speech communities and are learned by the same process of cultural transmission as other language behaviors (Corder, 1975), though teachers may be made conscious of their simplification strategies through their training and/or extensive experience in communicating with nonnative speakers. The fact that these codes show this systematic patterning within speech communities allows us to view them as a subsystem or "register" of the language (Henzl, 1973).

In this paper, I will discuss characteristics of simplified codes directed at nonnative speakers (NNSs) of the target language, traits that trigger the use of these codes, and issues related to them. I will also discuss simplified codes as they are used in the language classroom (teacher talk) and, finally, possible effects of simplified codes on English language teaching.

Foreigner Talk

The term *foreigner talk* (FT) was first used by Ferguson (1971) to describe speech used with foreigners perceived to be deficient in proficiency in the target language. Ferguson speculated that FT was a representation of the way native speakers (NSs) thought nonnative speakers spoke, since FT closely resembles the language elicited when NSs are asked to imitate foreigners (Ferguson, 1975). In fact, in English, secondary uses of FT include reporting the speech of foreigners (Ferguson, 1981). Also, in German and in Dutch, correlations have been found between the errors made in NNSs' speech and the errors used in the FT of their NS partners (Meisel, 1977; Snow, van Eeden and Muysken, 1981).

Characteristics of foreigner talk

Linguistic characteristics. Some characteristics of FT in English that Ferguson (1975) described included the absence of the copula (be verb); the absence of certain morphological markers (e.g., possessives, past tense, and 3rd person -s); and the presence of words that do not usually appear in English spoken to other NSs (e.g., *savvy* used as a verb and *heap* [meaning much or very]). Other characteristics include the use of full forms instead of contractions; the use of short sentences; the repetition of words; the selection of one all purpose form (e.g., *me* used for *I, me, mine*, and *my* in English or infinitive for all nonpast verb forms in Italian); and the use of feedback devices, such as tag questions (Ferguson and DeBose, 1977). These linguistic features generally include the most stereotypical features of the language of NNSs known to the community of NSs (Valdman, 1981). FT often differs from what is acceptable in standard language, as the characteristics listed by Ferguson and DeBose would indicate.

Nonlinguistic characteristics. Some nonlinguistic features of FT have also been described. They include speaking slowly; enunciating words carefully; increased volume, especially for important content words; and use of exaggerated gestures (Ramamurti, 1980). While these strategies can be helpful, they may have the unintended effect of making comprehension more difficult. As Hammerly (1982) pointed out, these features may have the effect of distorting speech, making it more difficult to understand.

FT and Pidgins

Ferguson (1971) posited that FT contributed to the development of pidgins, since it prevented NNSs from hearing well-formed, standard language. Comprehensible language is necessary for acquiring a target language (Krashen, 1982). If the comprehensible language that the NNS hears consists of nonstandard language, it is nonstandard language that is repeatedly reinforced and therefore acquired.

FT and NS/NSS Relations

Ferguson believed that FT was intended to derogate the person it was addressed to. Valdman (1981) agreed and suggested that NSs also use FT to maintain social distance from NNSs considered socially inferior or subservient. The NS recognizes his/her native language as an emblem of membership in the society and symbolically protects it from the outsider. In this way, the NS exerts control over the target language by presenting the NNS with an impoverished variety of it. This denial of the opportunity to assimilate has the effect of reducing the foreign learner's motivation and fossilizing the foreigner's language at a highly deviant stage.

Foreigner Register

In contrast to FT, there is a second variety of language for speaking to NNSs. This variety is called *foreigner register* (FR), a term coined by Arthur, Weiner, Culver, Lee, and Thomas (1979). FR was defined as a simplified register which follows the rules of the standard language, used by NSs in speaking to NNSs. The main difference between FT and FR is that FR follows the rules of the standard language while FT does not.

Characteristics of FR

Characteristics of FR that have been identified include use of high frequency vocabulary, simplified grammatical structure, and the avoidance of idioms (Gass and Varonis, 1985). In addition, FR has a higher percentage of yes/no questions (e.g., Are you going to class?) and or/choice questions (e.g., Are you going to class or to the cafeteria?) than wh- questions (e.g., Where are you going?) (Long, 1981). (Native speaker register [NSR], used by NSs to speak with other NSs, has more wh- questions than yes/no questions.)

Long and Sato (1983) also identified some rhetorical characteristics of FT. These include such devices as repetition, rephrasing, various forms of discourse repair, and comprehension checks.

Foreigner Talk, Foreigner Register, and Native Speaker Register

While FT can generally be distinguished from FR or NSR by its pidgin-like characteristics, the differences between FR and NSR are, in many cases, quantitative rather than qualitative. Therefore, the distinctions between FR and NSR are not always clear and precise. There is extensive overlap between syntactic forms that are used in FR and those used in NSR. The same structure may occur in both registers. For example, wh- questions and yes/no questions appear in both FR and NSR; the difference is in the percentage of each (Long, 1981). This fact has sometimes made it difficult to distinguish FR from NSR.

Not all researchers make the distinction between FR and FT. Some (Henzl, 1979; Tarone, 1980) consider both to be part of the same phenomenon. However, the distinction appears to be useful and will be employed in this paper. Also, these terms are not universally used to refer to this distinction. For example, Long (1981) uses the term *grammatical foreigner talk* when he refers to what Arthur, Weiner, Culver, Lee, and Thomas (1979) designated as FR.

Issues Related to FT and FR

Strategies in FT and FR

It has been hypothesized that the NNS's linguistic insufficiency triggers FT or FR (Freed, 1981), or more accurately, the NS's perception of the NNS's linguistic insufficiency (Gass and Varonis, 1985; Schinke-Llano, 1983). Gass and Varonis speculated that in listening to and interacting with the NNS, the NS forms an impression about whether the NNS can understand NSR. If the NS forms the impression that the NNS will not understand NSR, he/she may use FT or FR to make messages easier for the NNS to understand (Ferguson, 1971), i.e., to lighten the NNS's interactional burden.

This effort to lighten the interactional burden can take several forms (Long, 1981). One of the most obvious strategies is that of simplifying grammatical structures. This notion of simplifying can be nebulous, however, since it is not always easy to determine whether one grammatical structure is "simpler" than another (Ferguson and DeBose, 1977). Strategies for simplification include omitting material (e.g., copulas and articles); reducing irregularity; and using short, simple sentences rather than longer ones with relative or subordinate clauses (e.g., "His aunt came to visit him. She lives in California," rather than, "His aunt, who lives in California, came to visit him.").

NSs may also simplify the lexicon and use high frequency words and words likely to be within the vocabulary range of the NNS. However, as will be discussed in more detail in the section on teacher talk, this may have the consequence of making the meaning less accurate and specific.

Yes/no questions and or/choice questions (e.g., "Are you studying English or business?") are more frequent in FT and FR than in NSR, because it is considered easier for the NNS to respond with a "yes" or "no" or to repeat one of the choices given in the question rather than to respond with completely new information (Long and Sato, 1983).

Other strategies involve not so much simplifying as clarifying the message (Ferguson and DeBose, 1977). This may involve adding redundancy to the message, supplying material that is normally omitted (e.g., "You close the door," rather than "Close the door.") and using full forms instead of contractions or reductions.

NSs may also use different strategies for certain functions when speaking to the NNS. For example, questions have a higher frequency as topic-initiating moves in FT or FR than in NSR. Long (1981) found that 96% of topic-initiating moves were in the form of questions in NS-NNS interaction but only 62% in NS-NS interaction. Long speculated on several reasons for this. Questions lead naturally to answers, while the expected response to a statement may not be so obvious. Questions encourage, perhaps even compel, the NNS to participate in the conversation, since in most cultures, questions require answers (Long and Sato, 1983). In addition, linguistic markers associated with questions (e.g., subject-auxiliary inversion and rising intonation) can be used to signal to the NNS that a speaking turn is approaching. Questions encode at least part of the expected response and therefore make responding easier, because they only require confirmation or denial of the already encoded proposition. It also seems to be easier to understand what kind of response is expected to a question than it is to understand what kind of response is expected to a statement.

Triggers of FT and FR

Nonnative speaker traits. NNS traits that have been posited to trigger FR or FT include pronunciation, grammatical proficiency, vocabulary, fluency (ability to speak smoothly, without unnecessary pauses), demonstration of lack of comprehension, and an interaction among these. One or all of these traits help the NS form an impression of the NNS's level of proficiency and influence his/her use of FT or FR (Gass and Varonis, 1985).

NNSs obviously vary widely in their ability to pronounce English, and pronunciation may be taken as an indication of overall proficiency. If the NNS's production is not fluent, i.e., if the rate of speaking is slow or if the speech is punctuated by long or inappropriate pauses, this is interpreted as indicating time required to process the grammatical structures or to search for a lexical item (Butterworth, 1975). The NNS's grammatical and lexical proficiency in speaking may be taken as an indication of the level of proficiency at which he/she can comprehend the language. If the NNS demonstrates a lack of comprehension, the NS may respond by switching from NSR to FR or FT, recognizing an initial overestimation of the NNS's proficiency.

Native speaker traits. NS traits may also affect the use of FR or FT. However, while numerous studies look at the effects that NNS traits have on use of FT or FR, none have systematically looked at the traits of the NS. One possible factor is familiarity with nonnative speech (Gass and Varonis, 1985). While Gass and Varonis do not try to explain this relationship, one possible explanation is that familiarity with nonnative speech may make the NS more familiar with possible simplification strategies, which he/she may put to use in FR or FT. Another explanation is that the NS assumes that the NNS can comprehend what he/she can produce, and bases FR or FT on utterances that NNSs produce.

Another possible variable is experience dealing with NNSs (Hatch, Shapira, and Gough, 1978). Presumably, a person who has had experience interacting with NNSs will be more sensitive to the areas in which they may have difficulties. As a result of practice and experience, perhaps through trial-and-error, they may have well-developed simplification and clarification strategies for dealing with those difficulties.

Another influence on the choice to use FT or FR may be experience speaking a foreign language with native speakers of that language. A person who has had the experience of being the object of FR or FT in another language may be aware of simplification or clarification strategies and their usefulness in facilitating communication. Hatch, Shapira and Gough (1978) mentioned this as a possible influence, though they did not feel that experience speaking a foreign language with native speakers was a sufficient explanation. In their study, FT was demonstrated both by a subject who had no experience with language study and by one who had extensive experience. (However, this part of their study included only two speakers.)

It is not clear what triggers FT rather than FR, assuming that this distinction is meaningful. Among the traits that have been suggested to influence the choice to use FT or FR are ethnocentricity (belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group) and prejudice (an adverse opinion about a certain group, formed without direct knowledge) against foreigners or against persons of a particular nationality (Valdman, 1981). As mentioned above, Ferguson (1971) and Valdman (1981) have suggested FT indicates a desire to maintain distance from foreigners, to indicate to them that their assimilation in the target culture is not desirable. If this is true, then ethnocentric NSs and NSs who are prejudiced against foreigners would be more inclined to use FT.

Teacher Talk

The FT or FR addressed by teachers to students in the classroom perceived to be of limited language proficiency is referred to as *teacher talk* (TT). More specifically, TT is defined as "anything that the teacher says spontaneously, without a script, the actual linguistic content of which is created to suit a particular need" (Frey, 1988). It includes the language used in the classroom for giving directions, explaining, correcting, reacting, reinforcing, and asking questions.

Like both FT and FR, TT is influenced by the linguistic inequality between the speaker and hearer. In addition, however, it is influenced by typical features of classroom interaction, particularly by the inequality of status between teacher and student (Henzl, 1973).

Characteristics of TT

Linguistic and nonlinguistic characteristics. Studies of the characteristics of TT have isolated characteristics similar to FR, including high frequency lexical items, simplified syntax, clear enunciation, and numerous pauses (Henzl, 1973). In addition, teacher talk tends to focus on the "here and now." Long and Sato (1983) found significantly more instances of present temporal reference than nonpresent temporal reference.

Questions in teacher talk. Long and Sato (1983) looked at questions as they are used in TT. They compared questions asked by teachers in ESL classes and questions asked by NSs in casual conversation with NNSs. Their results indicated that ESL teachers used significantly more display questions (questions intended to establish the addressee's knowledge) than referential questions (questions intended to provide contextual information about situations, events, actions, purposes, relationships, or properties). In contrast, the results indicated that display questions were almost unknown in casual conversation between NSs and NNSs, and referential questions were common. In addition, questions in general were less commonly used by teachers in the classroom than by NSs in casual conversation.

Inaccuracy and Lack of Clarity in TT

Teachers should be aware that simplification may be at the expense of specificity and accuracy (Chaudron, 1983). Chaudron compared lectures given to native English speakers in Canada with lectures on the same topics given to NNSs. He found that the higher frequency words used in the lectures to NNSs often resulted in a lack of clarity or accuracy. For example, "funny" was substituted for "ironic" and "feeling" for "myth," making the intended meaning of the lecture for the NNSs less clear and specific.

Students' Reaction to TT

Lynch (1988) compared students' reactions to two video tapes, one made of a teacher telling a story to NSs of English and another of the teacher telling the same story to EFL students. The version for EFL students included comprehension checks, pauses, and alteration of idiomatic speech. EFL students who listened to this version reported that they felt that they were being "talked down to." These results indicate that EFL students may recognize TT and may feel that it denigrates them. Therefore, while teachers should realize that TT is often necessary for comprehension, it is important that they not use TT that is simplified more than necessary for comprehension.

Effects of Simplified Registers on Language Learners

The study of simplified registers, particularly foreigner talk, foreigner register, and teacher talk, has attracted the interest of language teachers and researchers in the area of language teaching. While simplified registers seem to be, for the most part, used unconsciously, it is useful for teachers to be more aware of their use of these registers and the effects that they may have on comprehension and acquisition.

If acquisition of language is based on comprehensible input, as Krashen (1982) theorizes, the input that language learners receive will be likely to influence language acquisition (Long, 1985). This is a particularly important issue in EFL settings, where a high percentage of learners' input is in the form of TT. Even in a class not taught with the communicative approach advocated by Krashen, learners may acquire grammatical structures through the language that the teacher uses in class, including explanations, instructions, etc. (Littlebrown, 1986). While there is little actual research about the use of simplified language in the classroom, a number of points can be made about its potential effects in the classroom.

First, simplification helps make language comprehensible (Long, 1985). According to Krashen's theory, comprehensible input at a level slightly beyond the learner's level of proficiency is what makes acquisition possible. Therefore, simplification on the part of teachers and others who interact with learners helps provide the learners with comprehensible input, making language acquisition possible.

Second, if the strategies used for simplification result in nonstandard language (for example, deletion of the copula or articles or use of one all-purpose form), it is nonstandard language that learners will acquire. Since this is obviously undesirable, ungrammatical simplified structures should be avoided.

Third, if language is simplified too much, it will be within the level of proficiency that learners have already acquired. Therefore, learners will not acquire new structures. In addition, if learners infer that the oversimplified TT is derogatory (whether or not it is intended to be), this is likely to raise a barrier between the teacher and the learners.

Fourth, a characteristic of some TT is slower speech, careful enunciation, and clear pronunciation. If learners have little other input, they will be likely to become dependent on this slow, clear speech. They will not have the opportunity to become accustomed to the nonlinguistic characteristics of NSR and will have great difficulty comprehending NSR if they encounter it.

Fifth, teachers should be aware of the possibility that using higher frequency words may cause a loss of accuracy, specificity, and clarity, as Chaudron (1983) pointed out. Teachers might consider using lower frequency words for which learners can guess the meaning from the context, particularly if this allows clearer, more accurate, and more specific expression.

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6. Communicative Competence in English: Teaching about Functions

Abstract

Grammatical competence is the knowledge that native speakers have about what is grammatical in their language. This concept has been expanded to include the knowledge of what is not only grammatically correct but also appropriate — communicative competence. Although communicative competence is necessary for effective use of the language, it is an aspect that is often neglected in second/foreign language teaching.

In this paper, I discuss the types of communicative competence and focus particularly on sociolinguistic competence, which is the ability to produce and comprehend appropriate utterances based on the situation, the people involved in the communication, etc. I discuss its development in the first language and studies of second/foreign language speakers which indicate some of their weaknesses in this area. I discuss sources of these problems and how they can be dealt with in language classes.

The Concept of Competence

The role that competence, as opposed to performance, plays in language use was first discussed by Chomsky (1965). However, Chomsky's conceptualization of competence dealt only with grammatical competence, that is, the knowledge that native speakers of a language have about what is grammatically acceptable in their language and their ability to generate an infinite number of sentences based on their knowledge of the rules of grammar.

Hymes (1972, 1974) expanded on Chomsky's concept of competence, using the term "communicative competence" to describe the ability not only to apply the rules of grammar correctly but to use utterances appropriately. He referred to the "rules of use" or "rules of speaking," without which knowledge of grammatical rules would be worthless. Children, Hymes wrote, need to learn more than what may possibly be said in order to function effectively as members of a community. They need to learn what should and should not be said in a given situation. In fact, a person who knew what could conceivably be said in a language but had no idea of what should and should not be said would be a "social monster."

As Wolfson (1989) pointed out, Hymes did not intend to propose a dichotomy between grammatical and communicative competence. Rather he intended to focus on the fact that a discussion of language needs to include both an awareness of grammatical forms and of their appropriate use

Rules of speaking, if they are dealt with at all, are often treated as "frosting on the cake," to use Beebe's (1994a) words. Students are taught grammatical rules first, and then, as they become more advanced, teachers and textbooks may (or may not) deal with concepts of politeness and appropriateness. However, Beebe strongly rejects this approach, asserting that rules of speaking are basic to successful communication and must be taught from an early stage in language teaching.

Other theorists have expanded on Hymes' ideas of communicative competence. The term "register" is used to denote the concept that speakers or writers modify their utterances based on the situation in which they are communicating. This modification can be based on the formality of the situation, the identities of the other people involved, and so on (Halliday, McIntosh, and Strevens, 1970). Other aspects of communicative competence include the ability to use repair strategies (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, 1974) and the ability to perform functions (e.g., apologies, promises, requests) with language (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

Types of Competence

Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a framework of communicative competence. They divided competence into four areas.

1) Grammatical competence. This area includes the ability to comprehend and manipulate vocabulary, the rules of word formation and combination, pronunciation, spelling, etc.
2) Sociolinguistic competence. This area includes the ability to produce and comprehend appropriate utterances, based on the situation, the people involved in the communication, etc.
3) Discourse competence. Discourse competence is the ability to combine grammatical forms into a unified spoken or written text appropriate to the situation and purpose.
4) Strategic competence. This refers to the ability to use communication strategies to achieve goals, compensate for breakdowns of communication, etc.

While factor analysis has thus far failed to isolate these factors in English language learners, the framework is still a useful basis for pedagogical proposals (Ellis, 1991). It allows language teachers to consider these facets of language and how they can be addressed in the classroom.

For the purpose of this paper, I am interested primarily in the area of sociolinguistic competence, particularly in the appropriate use of functions in English.

Sociolinguistic Competence

The First Language

Piaget (1970) and other theorists have argued that at the age of 4 or 5, children are not aware of variations in sociocultural appropriateness. Around the age of 8 or 10, children gradually develop a sense of sociocultural awareness. Younger children, according to this view, are too egocentric to function as social beings and so have little awareness of notions of appropriateness and do not take into account listener characteristics in planning their speech.

A small but growing body of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research, however, contradicts this assertion (Anderson, 1990). Anderson argues that by the time they reach 4 or 5 years of age, children have been exposed to a wide variety of different speech settings – the doctor's office, the preschool, birthday parties, the grocery store, etc.

Anderson did a study of children between 4 and 7 years of age, using puppets to role play various situations. She found that children as young as 4 years old were sensitive "to the fact that utterances can express a whole range of social information tied to status (age, sex, and occupation) and to familiarity of speaker and addressee . . . ." (p. 15)

The children's demonstration of sociolinguistic knowledge was most striking in the area of directives (requests, commands, etc.). As Anderson points out, because of the demands that directives make on the hearer, and because of the wide variety of realizations available for directives, the choice of directive type can provide a great deal of information about the context and relative status, familiarity, etc., of the speaker and hearer. Anderson's results indicated that although the children became more sophisticated in their use of directives as they grew older, by age 4 they used the same range of directive types that adults use. The children that Anderson observed systematically modified the directives that they used, based on the social context and the people involved. Thus from a very early age, native English speakers show an awareness of and sensitivity to sociolinguistic expectations in different situations.

It is not yet clear how children gain sociolinguistic competence in their first language (Anderson, 1990). While parents and teachers might do some explicit teaching, it seems intuitively obvious that children must learn most of what they know about the sociolinguistic rules of their language through observation in a wide variety of situations.

The Second Language

Many speakers of English as a second or foreign language, though they may speak it fluently and even idiomatically, have difficulty with sociolinguistic aspects of language. Linguistic and sociolinguistic competence might even be thought of as being independent. A speaker might produce an utterance which is perfectly grammatical but inappropriate in context or which contains grammatical errors but which is appropriate (Ellis, 1991). In the former case, a second/foreign language speaker may come across to native speakers, especially those not accustomed to communicating with nonnative speakers, as rude, slow, or difficult (Chen, Linnell, Porter, and Stone, 1992). In fact, in their study of the appropriate use of apologies, Chen, Linnell, Porter, and Stone did not find correlations between linguistic proficiency, as measured by TOEFL scores, and the ability to supply appropriate apologies.

Studies of second language sociolinguistic competence. There is a growing body of research on the sociolinguistic competence of second/foreign language learners, especially as it relates to their use of functions in the target language. These studies indicate that sociolinguistic competence is a source of difficulty for second/foreign language learners, one that is often ignored in language curricula.

In a study of 20 nonnative English speakers from mixed language backgrounds and 20 native speakers, Chen, Linnell, Porter, and Stone (1992) found that the nonnative speakers significantly undersupplied explicit apologies and acknowledgement of their need to apologize in some situations.

Kasper (1984) and Richards (1980) found that nonnative speakers in their second language tended to take utterances too literally, not recognizing the intended function. They found that nonfluent nonnative speakers tended to pay too much attention to the surface meaning of utterances, the form rather than the function.

Fukushima and Iwata (1985) did a study comparing role plays of an invitation and two requests, using American native English speakers and advanced Japanese students of English in Japan. Their results indicated that, compared to the Americans, the Japanese participants were more direct and did not differentiate between situations where directness was appropriate and situations where politeness required indirectness. The researchers concluded that the Japanese participants were not able to manipulate the language proficiently, although they were aware that different situations require different levels of politeness.

In a study of refusals in English and Japanese, Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) found that in making refusals, Japanese speakers of English tended to use elements and content in their refusals more similar to Japanese speakers of Japanese than American speakers of English.

In a review of studies on sociolinguistic competence of Japanese speakers of English, Ellis (1991), though he warned against putting too much weight on stereotypes, summarized the findings of the studies by concluding that Japanese speakers tended to:

1) be more direct than English speakers in some situations, especially when speaking to a person of lower status, and less direct than Americans in others,
2) lack the politeness strategies needed to perform such functions as requests and invitations,
3) be less explicit in giving reasons for refusing, and
4) vary use of expressions more according to differences in status rather than to differences in familiarity, unlike native English speakers (Americans and Australians in the studies cited). The native English speakers tended to be more polite to unfamiliar people, regardless of their relative status, while the Japanese people tended to be more polite to people of higher status and less polite to people of lower status, regardless of their familiarity.

Sources of Problems with Second Language Sociolinguistic Competence

The problems that Japanese speakers of English displayed with sociolinguistic competence seem to stem from three sources (Tanaka, 1988).

Transfer. The first source is the transfer of sociocultural patterns from Japanese to English. Often lacking knowledge of sociolinguistic appropriateness in English, they substitute what they would do in Japanese. (This may be a partly unconscious process – sociolinguistic appropriateness sometimes seems so natural that it is easy to assume that it is universal.) If the sociolinguistic expectations are similar, this is a useful strategy, but of course there are many situations in which they are not. A number of studies indicate that there is transfer of sociolinguistic knowledge from the native language to the target language (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990), though speakers living in the United States evidenced less transfer than those living in Japan (Takahashi and Beebe, 1987). That is, research indicates that second language speakers draw on knowledge of how a function is performed in their first language in order to perform it in their target language. However, as they experience natural interaction, they seem to learn more about how the function is performed appropriately in the target language and thus depend less on transfer.

Richards and Sukwiwat (1985) identified four aspects of noncorrespondence between L1 and L2 that might result in problems with transfer. They were:

1) Differences in social situations. There may be social situations in one culture that do not exist or are very rare in the other culture. For example, Japanese people rarely if ever entertain guests other than relatives in their homes, while Americans commonly do. Japanese may have difficulties because they are not familiar with the situation.
2) Same situation, different routine. Americans usually acknowl-

edge a compliment with an expression of appreciation, but Japanese usually reject the compliment.

3) Same routine, different function. In Japanese, sometimes appreciation is expressed with the equivalent of "I'm sorry," which is not used to express appreciation in English.

4) Correct routine, wrong situation. A speaker might generalize an expression to a situation that it is not intended to be used in. For example, "Nice to meet you," is used only for a first meeting, not at subsequent meetings.

Lack of linguistic control. A second source of problems is a lack of linguistic control (Tanaka, 1988). This seems to be particularly true for the less direct expressions which are important to politeness in English (Tanaka, 1988; Fukushima and Iwata, 1985), such as, "I was wondering if you would. . ." as a request. If Japanese speakers of English are too direct in English, it is likely to be at least partly because they do not control the expressions that they need to be able to use rather than that they are not aware of differences in the politeness requirements of different situations. Even if they are aware of these expressions, they have probably not had enough opportunity to practice their use in conversation.

Stereotypes about English speakers' directness. A third problem is the stereotypes that many Japanese people have about English speakers as being direct and egalitarian. Compared to Japanese speakers, English speakers are comparatively straightforward, and the politeness system in English is not as structured grammatically as the one in Japanese. This may lead to the misconception that politeness and indirectness are not necessary and that Americans are direct in every situation (Ellis, 1991). Therefore, Japanese speakers of English may not recognize the ways in which politeness is encoded in English.

Presentation in textbooks. Politeness in general and functions in particular are not dealt with in Japanese junior high or high school classrooms (Ellis, 1991; LoCastro, 1993). In a review of junior high and high school textbooks, LoCastro found that politeness is not dealt with explicitly at all, in part because the Course of Study of the Ministry of Education does not mandate it. If polite expressions occur in textbooks, they are only dealt with in passing, not as a point of teaching.

One particular area of difficulty that LoCastro (1993) pointed out, which was also studied by Altman (1990), was that of giving advice or making suggestions. In the textbooks that LoCastro reviewed, "had better" was translated into Japanese as ". . . *no hoo ga ii desu*." The Japanese expression is probably closer to the English expression "It would be better if you would. . . ," a relatively weak suggestion. The translation used in the textbooks gives the impression that "had better" is a weak form of suggestion, when in fact it is strong. In Altman's study, native English speakers and nonnative speakers of mixed first language backgrounds (including some Japanese speakers) ranked "must," "have to," "'d better," "should," "BE supposed to," "can," and "could" according to how strong they were perceived to be. The main difference was that the native English speakers ranked "'d better" as being relatively strong, third behind "must" and "have to," but the nonnative speakers ranked it as the weakest expression. This could lead to misunderstanding, since the expression "had better" is a much stronger expression of advice than Japanese people speaking English might realize. A native English speaker might be offended by such a strong expression of advice, and the Japanese person would not even realize what had caused the offense.

Teaching about Functions in the Language Classroom

Sounding exactly like a native English speaker is not necessarily a realistic or even desirable goal for Japanese speakers of English. However, when Japanese speakers violate sociolinguistic rules, they may appear pushy, cold, or rude, far from the image that they would wish to present or think that they are presenting. Therefore, it is useful for Japanese speakers of English to be aware of sociolinguistic appropriateness in English (Tanaka, 1988).

The most basic issue that students need to understand is that form does not always equal function (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). For example, "Can you open the window?" might be a questions about ability, a request, or a suggestion. Without understanding this, students cannot use expressions for functions appropriately. It is useful therefore to introduce the students to the idea that form and function are not always the same, for example, by showing them dialogues using the same form for different functions and using the same function with different forms.

Making Use of Students' First Language

There is some disagreement on whether the use of students' knowledge of the sociolinguistic system of their first language is helpful to them in becoming sociolinguistically competent in the second language. Methods such as the audio-lingual method specifically prohibit drawing comparisons or contrasts with the students' native language(s). However, some more recent approaches encourage such use (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983).

In my experience teaching about functions, I have found that using examples from Japanese, either to point out contrasts or to help students see parallels, is useful. Pointing out parallels with Japanese in, for example, how speakers decide how polite to make a request, seems to help students understand the concept in a way that just trying to explain the principles for English does not. Obviously, though, the point must be made that sociological appropriateness is not always parallel.

As Holmes and Brown (1976) wrote,

> the adolescent or adult second language learner is by no means sociolinguistically naive since he has already acquired the complex sociolinguistic system used in his native speech

> community. In learning how to use and interpret the sociolinguistic rules of English he must develop an awareness of areas where the sociolinguistic system of his native language differs from that of English and where 'misinterpretation and misanalysis' is most likely to occur. . . . Adult students bring to second language learning an ability to introspect which can be extremely valuable. . . . The learner's sociolinguistic competence in his native language can be regarded as an asset rather than a liability, in that it facilitates the contrastive analysis of different sociolinguistic systems in the classroom (Holmes and Brown, 1976: 424-426).

Holmes and Brown (1976) developed a program to develop sociolinguistic competence in English. They made use of various activities, including pairing situations with utterances that would be appropriate, providing appropriate utterances for various situations, and role playing. In all the activities they used, they contrasted expressions in the students' own culture with those used in English.

The authors reported that as the course progressed, students became more aware of differences between locutionary and illocutionary force in their exchanges with native English speakers.

I have often found it useful, as Holmes and Brown advocate, to help students find parallels between Japanese and English. This process seems to help students recognize the similarities between what they do in Japanese and what they should be doing in English.

For example, in deciding how polite to make a request, three factors, in both English and Japanese, are the size of the request (that is, the amount of money, time or effort it would involve on the part of the hearer), the relative status of the speaker and the hearer, and the familiarity of the speaker and the hearer (Minami, 1987). If students think about how they make requests in Japanese, perhaps with some questions to guide them (Are you more polite in making a request of your teacher or of your friend? Why?), it helps them understand this concept.

Using Japanese students' knowledge of their own sociolinguistic system is also helpful to point out the limitations of drawing parallels between the two languages. For example, Americans put more emphasis on the size of the request in deciding how polite to make the request, but Japanese put more emphasis on the status of the hearer (Minami, 1987).

Contrasting Expressions and Dialogues

Ellis (1991) advocates that, at a minimum, students should have their consciousness raised about sociolinguistic factors in communication in English. This should include knowledge of some basic formulas used in functions in English and some awareness of issues related to appropriateness. Because the situation in which Japanese students learn English, especially at the junior high and high school levels, does not allow for any extensive practice, sometimes the best a teacher can do is to make students aware of the issues involved. Ellis gives two examples of this: an exercise where students supply a refusal of an invitation and then compare their response to an example and an exercise where they make inappropriate refusals in dialogues more polite.

I have also found it useful to have students contrast different realizations of the same function. For example, students might be asked to compare expressions like "You should pay more attention to what you're doing," and "We all need to pay more attention to what we're doing," used in a conversation between a supervisor and an employee after the employee has made a mistake. The first expression refers directly to the employee's performance. The second is a generalization, but in this context, the employee would understand that it refers to him/her. Being able to see the contrast between these two expressions makes this point about realizations of complaints clearly. The teacher can use this example to point out that in English, complaints are often expressed through generalizations. It is a way of making the complaint more polite and less offensive, since it does not refer directly to the person being complained of. Recognizing this will help students both recognize complaints that are directed at them and help them complain without being unnecessarily offensive.

In addition to comparing isolated utterances, it is also useful to compare dialogues in order to point out sociolinguistic problems in communication between English speakers and Japanese speakers (e.g., Kitao and Kitao, 1991). In the first dialogue, there might be problems, for example, with refusing an invitation too directly and without giving a reason. This demonstrates problems that a Japanese speaker might make in English and the reactions that an English speaker might have. In the second dialogue, the Japanese speaker could refuse the invitation appropriately. Comparing these two dialogues helps students recognize sociolinguistic problems in context and learn useful expressions for different situations.

Beebe (1994b) also suggests using such an approach, but she emphasizes that teachers should collect the data on which the dialogues are based themselves. Beebe suggests that teachers observe functions in naturalistic settings and write down what they hear. In a setting where there are not many native speakers of the target language, radio, television programs, videos, movies, etc., can be used as sources of data.

Students can also be asked to rewrite the dialogues to make them, for example, more or less formal (Beebe, 1994b). If students are studying a dialogue of a request to a close friend, the teacher can change the situation so that the request is being made of a casual acquaintance and ask students to rewrite the dialogue on that basis.

Students as Researchers

Beebe (1994b) also suggests that students can do research about functions themselves. In a setting where there are native speakers of the target language, students can observe and/or elicit certain functions and write them down or tape and transcribe them. Again, if there are few native speakers of the target language, students can depend on the mass media.

Beebe also suggests that students gather examples of the function in their native language and compare what they observe in their native language with the target language.

Role Plays

Role playing is often recommended to allow students to practice what they have learned and to help them move from having a knowledge of sociolinguistic appropriateness to being able to use what they know in a conversation. However, Japanese students may lack the proficiency to improvise role plays or simulations, especially when they are "performing" in front of the class. One alternative is to have students in pairs or groups plan or write out dialogues. In addition to giving students time to prepare, this gives the teacher an opportunity to help the groups or pairs of students individually before the dialogues are performed in front of the class. The teacher can also make note of types of problems with usage that occur frequently and discuss them with the class as a whole.

For more proficient classes, one group or pair of students might be assigned a role in a dialogue, with another pair or group assigned the other role. For example, one group would have the role of a student inviting a professor to a party. Another group would have the role of the professor who already has other plans for the night of the party. In preparation, the group members discuss what expressions are necessary and appropriate and then a representative of each group participates in the role play, consulting their group as necessary. To help students see how different expressions would be appropriate in different situations, another pair of groups could be assigned a similar situation, for example, inviting a friend to a party. This helps students to develop and use a broader repertoire of expressions and to see how they are appropriate in different situations.

Because of the strong influence of context on the expressions chosen to preform functions, it is important to present functions and expressions in context (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). Finocchiaro and Brumfit discussed the relationship between functions and the way that the speaker realizes the function, that is, the expression he/she chooses to carry out the function. For example, if a speaker wants to make a request in English, he/she has to choose among the expressions, "Do this," "Please do this," "I want you to do this," "I'd like you to do this," "Can you do this," "Could you do this," "I'd appreciate it if you would do this," "I wonder if you would mind doing this," etc. Finocchiaro and Brumfit proposed four factors in the situation that influence the choice of the expression that the speaker used to realize a function. The four factors are:

1) Persons. This factor includes the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, their relative ages and statuses, their social roles, and so on.
2) The place. This factor is the setting of the communication, whether it takes place in, for example, an office, a classroom, or a home.
3) The time. This includes such elements as whether the function occurs frequently or rarely and how long the communication is.
4) The topic or activity. This includes not only the function but its purpose. An invitation to dinner from a friend, for instance, is different from an invitation to the boss's office to discuss problems at work.

In presenting functions, organizing role plays, etc., these factors need to be taken into account.

Conclusion

It is obvious that development of grammatical competence is inadequate for communication in a second language. It is also necessary to develop sociolinguistic competence, that is, to learn what expressions are appropriate in what situations.

In addition to recognizing the necessity of making sociolinguistic competence a component of language programs, it is necessary to do more research on questions related to developing sociolinguistic competence. In what particular areas do Japanese speakers of English have problems? What are the causes of these problems? When, in relation to the development of grammatical competence, is it best to deal with sociolinguistic competence? What are the most effective ways of developing it? How can native language sociolinguistic competence be best used? Answers to these and other questions will be of use to classroom teachers.

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7. Variations in Success in Acquiring a Second Language: Two Approaches

Abstract

Second language learners vary greatly in their ability to acquire the second language. It is as rare to have a second language learner completely master a language as it is to have a first language learner fail to master the first language. The reasons for this failure are controversial. On one hand, it is theorized that the process of learning the second language is exactly like learning a first language, and the differences in first and second language acquisition are due to differences in the quantity and quality of input. In contrast, other theorists claim that there are differences between first and second language acquisition, and these differences explain the variation in acquisition.

In this paper, I discuss these two approaches and their implications.

The assertion that second language learners vary in their success in acquiring the second language, and that most of them do not completely master the second language, is so widely accepted it has not been considered necessary to demonstrate it with formal research (Bley-Vroman, 1989). However, the reasons for this variation are much more controversial. While there has been much research on the method of instruction in looking at this question, it is also necessary to look at the nature of language and the processes of both first and second language learning. In this paper, I discuss two approaches to the question of why some language learners are more successful than others. One approach looks at the social distance between the speakers of the target language and the learners' language, the resulting attitudes on the part of learners and speakers of the target language, and the type and amount of input the learner receives. The other approach looks at the differences between first and second language learners and between the processes by which language is learned.

Social Distance and Second Language Acquisition

One approach to the question of why some learners fail to completely master a second language looks at the problem from the point of view of social distance. Briefly, from this perspective it is maintained that the social distance between first and second language speakers influences the type and amount of input the second language speakers receive, their attitudes toward the second language, and the amount of motivation they have for learning the second language. These, in turn, influence the level of proficiency that second language speakers achieve. Some useful concepts in looking at this approach are pidginization, interlanguage, and foreigner talk. In this section, I will discuss each of these concepts and the theories about their relationships to social distance.

Pidgins and Pidginization

Pidgins and pidginization have, until relatively recently, been considered below the notice of serious linguistic study. However, many linguists have come to realize that pidgins and the processes by which they are formed are interesting both in and of themselves and because of the insights that they offer into language acquisition processes (Hall, 1966).

Pidginization is the process of simplification and reduction of language that occur when people who do not share the same language come in contact (Todd and Hancock, 1986). In the pidginization process, a language learner makes use of limited input to learn a language, the result of which is severely reduced in terms of lexicon and grammatical complexity in comparison to the target language(s) (Anderson, 1983). In some cases, the resulting language becomes standardized. This standardized language is called a pidgin. A *pidgin* is a language with severely reduced grammar and vocabulary used for communication between two or more people who have no common language (Hall, 1966). A pidgin language is the native language of none of its speakers (though it may be based on the native language of one or more of the speakers). Pidgin languages are used in cases of limited contact for specific, narrow purposes (Anderson, 1983). Pidgins develop in multilingual settings under conditions of major population displacement. They are spoken by adults who are already fluent in one or more other languages, which they use for other purposes. Pidgins are used only in contexts where there are no other common languages available to the participants.

Characteristics. The structure of a pidgin is simplified in comparison to the language(s) on which it is based. Certain morphological markers, such as plurals, gender markers, and tense markers, are omitted, along with prepositions, cupolas and other function words. Irregularity is reduced, and vocabulary is limited and usually drawn from the socially dominant language. Pidgins also often use one form for a number of different purposes, e.g., "no" for all negations.

Pidginization and Second Language Acquisition

There has been considerable discussion in the field of linguistics about how pidginization is related to the "ordinary" second language acquisition process (Anderson, 1983). Some scholars treat pidginization as a social phenomenon while others treat it as a cognitive phenomenon, and it is from this difference that the two major approaches to pidginization arise. For the scholars who treat pidginization as a social phenomenon, pidginization is a process that results in the formation of a pidgin language. Anderson refers to this as P-s. P-s is not just one learner's approximation of the target language but a standardized version used by people of different languages to communicate among themselves.

In contrast, if pidginization is considered as an individual psycholinguistic process, which Anderson refers to as P-i, it is the process that goes on in the brain of a language learner that results either in the use of a pidgin language or a simplified use of the target language in an individual acquisitional framework. In other words, P-i takes place whenever a learner begins acquiring a second or foreign language, unless or until the learner begins to speak a version of the language similar to that of native speakers (NSs). (Some scholars maintain that there are elements of pidginization in first language acquisition as well [Anderson, 1983], but that is beyond the scope of this paper.)

The P-i that takes place in ordinary second language acquisition is sometimes called interlanguage. ***Interlanguage*** is defined as the temporary, changing, rule-governed system of language constructed from the input that the learner receives in the target language. The characteristics of interlanguage resemble those of pidgins. For example, interlanguage is simplified in comparison to the NS's language; certain morphological markers are omitted as are some function words, irregularity is reduced, vocabulary is limited, and one form is often used for a number of different purposes (Anderson, 1983). While there are differences between pidgins and interlanguage, their similarities, from a P-i approach, may shed light on the process of language acquisition. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, the P-i approach to pidginization will be used, and pidgin and interlanguage will be treated together.

Depidginization

If speakers of, for example, an English-based pidgin have continued contact with NSs of English, the speakers of pidgin may eventually learn to speak English in a way similar to the way native speakers speak it (Schumann, 1978). By the same token, a student of English may gradually learn to speak English more like a native speaker. More morphological markers are used, as well as function words, and all-purpose forms are replaced by differentiated forms. This process of producing a closer and closer approximation of the target language is called depidginization. The study of this depidginization process leads to the obvious question of why some learners progress from pidginized language to depidginization and others do not. As mentioned above, one answer proposed by theorists working in the area of pidginization is related to the concept of social distance. In order to understand the role that social distance might play in second language acquisition, it is necessary to understand the role that input is believed to play in the second language acquisition process and the characteristics of the language directed at second language speakers.

Input and Second Language Acquisition

Input plays an important role in second language acquisition. It is through input that language learners form hypotheses about the language (Krashen and Seliger, 1975). Therefore, the characteristics of the input that they receive will influence the characteristics of the language that they acquire. In this section, I will discuss foreigner talk, its characteristics, the traits that elicit it, and its influence on language acquisition.

Foreigner talk. The term *foreigner talk* (FT) was first used by Ferguson (1971) to describe speech used with foreigners perceived to be deficient in proficiency in the target language. Some characteristics of FT in English that Ferguson (1975) described included absence of the copula (be verb); absence of certain morphological markers (e.g., possessives, past tense, and 3rd person -s); and presence of words that do not usually appear in English spoken to other native speakers (e.g., *savvy* as a verb and *heap* [meaning much or very]). Other characteristics include use of full forms instead of contractions; short sentences; repetition of words; selection of one all purpose form (e.g., *me* used for *I*, *me*, *mine*, and *my*); and feedback devices, such as tag questions (Ferguson and DeBose, 1977). FT may differ from what is acceptable in standard language.

Some theorists have made a distinction between FT and what is referred to as foreigner register (FR) (Arthur, Weiner, Culver, Lee, and Thomas, 1979) or grammatical foreigner talk (Long, 1981). FR was defined as a simplified register which follows the rules of the standard language, used by NSs in speaking to NNSs of the language. The difference between FT and FR is that FR follows the rules of the standard language and FT does not. Characteristics of FR that have been identified include use of high frequency vocabulary and simplified grammatical structure, and avoidance of idioms (Gass and Varonis, 1985).

It has been hypothesized that an NNS's linguistic insufficiency triggers FT or FR (Freed, 1981), or more accurately, the NS's perception of the NNS's linguistic insufficiency. In listening to and interacting with the NNS, the NS forms an impression about whether the NNS can understand NSR (Gass and Varonis, 1985; Schinke-Llano, 1983). If the NS forms the impression that the NNS will not understand NSR, he/she may use FT or FR to make messages easier for the NNS to understand (Ferguson, 1971), i.e., to lighten the NNS's interactional burden.

NNS traits that have been posited to trigger FR or FT include problems with pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency (ability to speak smoothly, without unnecessary pauses), comprehension, and an interaction among these (Gass and Varonis, 1985).

NS traits may also affect the use of FR or FT. However, while numerous studies look at the effects that NNS traits have on use of FT or FR, I could not find any that systematically looked at the traits of the NS. One possible factor is familiarity with nonnative speech (Gass and Varonis, 1985). While Gass and Varonis do not try to explain this relationship, one possible explanation is that familiarity with nonnative speech may make the NS more familiar with possible simplification strategies, which he/she may put to use in FR or FT. Another explanation is that the NS assumes that the NNS can comprehend what he/she can produce, and bases FR or FT on utterances that NNSs produce.

Another possible variable is experience dealing with NNSs (Hatch, Shapira, and Gough, 1978). A person who has had experience interacting with NNSs may be more sensitive to their areas of difficulty and have well-developed simplification and clarification strategies for dealing with those difficulties.

Social Distance

Schumann (1978) discussed the concept of social distance in relation to language acquisition. He isolated eight factors that influence language acquisition of second language learning groups by either inhibiting or promoting social solidarity. He posed these issues in the form of eight questions:

1. In relation to the target language group, is the second language learning group politically, culturally, technically or economically dominant, nondominant, or subordinate?
2. Is the integration pattern of the second language learning group assimilation (giving up their own culture to adopt those of the target language group), acculturation (adapting to the target language group but maintaining their own culture within their group) or preservation (rejecting the culture of the target language group while trying to maintain their own culture)?
3. What is the degree of the second language learning group's enclosure (maintenance of separate institutions, [e.g., schools, churches, clubs], professions or trades, etc.)?
4. Is the second language learning group cohesive?
5. What is the size of the second language learning group?
6. Are the cultures of the two groups congruent (similar)?
7. What are the attitudes of the two groups toward each other?

8. What is the second language learning group's intended length of residence in the area?

These eight dimensions have a variety of effects on the opportunities and desires of the second language learning group for second language acquisition. If one or the other of the groups is dominant, this may cause limited contact between the groups and therefore limited opportunity to acquire the target language. Among assimilation, acculturation, and preservation strategies, assimilation obviously offers the most opportunity for contact and preservation the least. High enclosure also impedes social contacts between the two groups, as do high cohesiveness in the second language learning group, large second language learning group size, negative attitude of one group toward the other, and short length of residence. Also, a second language learning group that is dominant, is preserving its own culture, is highly enclosed and highly cohesive, has negative attitudes toward the target language group, or intends to reside in the country for only a short time, may have little desire to learn the target language. Some of these dimensions must be looked at from the point of view of each group. For example, the second language learning group may desire to assimilate, but the target language group may oppose its assimilation, or vice versa.

Social Distance and FT

Schumann (1978) discussed the influence of these eight dimensions on the inclination and opportunity of the second language learning group to use the second language. However, these issues are also related to the use of FT. Ferguson believed that FT was intended to derogate the person it was addressed to. Valdman (1981) agreed and suggested that FT was also used to maintain social distance between NSs and NNSs considered socially inferior or subservient. It signals foreigners that their assimilation is not desirable in the host country; the NS recognizes that the mother tongue is the emblem of group membership and protects it from outsiders by presenting an impoverished variety. This denial of the opportunity to assimilate has the effect of reducing the foreign learner's motivation and fossilizing the foreigner's language at a highly deviant stage. If members of the target language group consider the second language group to be subordinate, they may not want members of the second language group to assimilate into the target culture and may signal this with FT. If the second language learning group is cohesive, the target language group may view them with suspicion and dislike and, again, may signal their opposition to the group's assimilation by using FT.

As mentioned above, if a learner of a second language receives only FT as input, he/she is likely to learn to speak the target language just as he/she hears it. While this is not the only factor in the failure of language learners to develop beyond pidginized language, certainly it is one that bears investigation.

The Fundamental Difference Hypothesis

A different though not contradictory approach to why some language learners reach a plateau in their mastery of the language was taken by Bley-Vroman (1989). He approached the problem by looking at the differences between the process of child language learning and adult second language learning.

In the area of first language development, it has been hypothesized that children have a Universal Grammar, a set of abstract universal principles that account for similarities across languages. The Universal Grammar is made up of sets of parameters defining possible variations across languages, the setting of each parameter being determined by input. These parameters are instantiated through a set of domain specific procedures (Chomsky, 1981).

While many linguists and language teachers accept the hypothesis that the process of first and second language learning are similar, Bley-Vroman argues that they are not. He discussed several obvious characteristics of adult language learning that are different from child language learning. They included:

1. A lack of guaranteed success. While normal children inevitably master their native language, the same cannot be said of adult language learners. Complete success in learning a foreign language is very rare. It is, in fact, so unusual that Selinker (1972) compared it to the "pathological" status of failures in first language acquisition.
2. Variation in degree of success. Adult language learners, in fact, vary greatly in their mastery of a second language, even if such factors as age, exposure, and instruction are held constant. Learners also vary in the nature of their success, that is, some learners are successful in one area of language learning but not another. Some learners develop fluency but not accuracy; others, accuracy but not fluency.
3. Variation in goals. Second language learners also vary greatly in their goals for learning a second language. Some learners are satisfied with a pidginized version of the second language that is nevertheless communicatively useful. Others develop competence in just one area, for example, the skill necessary to deal with hotel guests. First language learners, in contrast, are "driven by the inexorable operation of the domain-specific language faculty" and "do not have the luxury of setting their own individual goals" (Bley-Vroman, 1989: 46).
4. Fossilization. Second language learners often reach a certain stage of learning and find themselves unable, in spite of conscious efforts, to go further. This is a state Selinker (1972) referred to as *fossilization*. This phenomenon is sometimes observed in learners who have reached a level where their proficiency is useful communicatively, even though they have not reached native proficiency. Children, in contrast, pass through all stages of language learning and do not become fossilized.
5. Importance of instruction. The role of instruction in second lan-

guage learning is unclear. There are serious difficulties inherent in studying a topic with so many uncontrollable variables, and the method of instruction is also an important variable. However, studies exist that show that instruction, as opposed to mere exposure to native speaker input, is important in adult second language learning. In contrast, first language learning in children does not appear to require any formal instruction.

6. Role of affective factors. There is a consensus among second language acquisition researchers and language teachers that such factors as personality, motivation, attitude, and self-esteem play a part in second language learning, although the specific contributions of these factors and their exact relationship to second language learning is not at all clear. However, these do not appear to play a part in first language learning.

The Fundamental Difference Hypothesis suggests that adult language learners no longer have access to the Universal Grammar or the domain specific procedures used to instantiate it. Bley-Vroman formalized his discussion of these differences in the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis. This hypothesis states that differences between adult and child language learning are internal (caused by differences in internal cognitive states, not external factors), linguistic (caused by changes in the language faculty specifically, not a general change in learning ability) and qualitative (not merely quantitative, in that the domain-specific acquisition system is unavailable, not just attenuated).

Bley-Vroman proposed, rather, that adults make use of their knowledge of their native language and of general problem-solving systems to learn a second language, pointing out that the characteristics of second language learning discussed above appear to be more similar to the learning of such skills as chess playing or playing a musical instrument than they are to first language learning. Bley-Vroman theorized that knowledge of the native language provides information about features of language, that is, the learner will expect a language to have a syntax, a lexicon divided into parts of speech, a system of morphology, and so on. This might be described as a schema for a language, that is, an organized generic knowledge structure composed of *slots* or *placeholders* for each component, with information about constraints on what can normally fill a particular slot and relationships among the slots (Anderson, 1978). Using this schema, a second language learner may, to some extent, reconstruct the Universal Grammar. This reconstruction may be both a hindrance and a help, since the learner may assume that some characteristics of the native language are universal, when, in fact, they aren't.

Bley-Vroman's hypothesis was supported by a study by Schachter (1989). Schachter studied proficient speakers of English as a second language from Korea, Indonesia, and China, using a grammar point that is different between Korean and English and partially different between English and Chinese and English and Indonesian. Based on participants' judgments of grammatical sentences and violations, Schachter concluded that the results for the Korean participants clearly supported the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis, though the results were less clear for Indonesian and Chinese participants, whose languages partially overlap with English.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed two approaches to the question of why second language speakers vary widely in the proficiency that they achieve in a second language — a social distance approach and the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis, two approaches that are different but not contradictory. More research is necessary to support or dispute these notions. In addition, further research is necessary to evaluate the effect that each approach might have on the teaching and learning of second languages.

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8. Developing Exercises for Reading Materials

Abstract

Teachers may at times want to develop their own reading materials or make materials to supplement lessons. In this paper, I discuss choosing materials to use to teach reading, defining difficult vocabulary words, and making exercises to help students understand the reading passages.

Reading is defined by Harris and Sipay, in *How to Increase Reading Ability*, as "the meaningful interpretation of written or printed verbal symbols" (Harris and Sipay, 1975: 5). In the beginning, the student learns that those strange-looking marks represent sounds. Gradually, the student learns to recognize a series of sounds — a word — more and more quickly and accurately. Eventually, the student comes to recognize phrases and see them as units of meaning. Ideally, as the student begins to read more complex material, he/she masters more complex forms of expression and enlarges his/her store of concepts, ideas and information. The student begins to differentiate types of reading — reading a novel for pleasure from reading a textbook from reading a TV schedule — and develops different strategies for each type. The student is able to compare what he/she is reading with other things he/she has read, opinions, previous experiences, and so on (Harris and Sipay, 1975: 5-7).

Most Japanese students have developed only the lower-level skills in reading English. They know the correspondence between symbols and sounds and can recognize words, but beyond that, they tend to translate word for word into Japanese and to understand the passage in Japanese. They do not give one word or sentence any more weight than any other. Reading is simply decoding something in English and re-encoding it into Japanese. College reading textbooks have notes in Japanese and translations rather than definitions of difficult words, so translation is encouraged rather than discouraged. Because texts contain mostly narratives or essays, students are rarely exposed to other literary forms, and they don't learn strategies for dealing with other types of material.

Selecting Materials – Why, Where and How

There are a number of reasons why a teacher might want to select his/her own reading material and develop exercises for it. "A teacher may wish to give a functional dimension to an existing language course that is structure-based and to use her own materials to enrich her lesson" (Khoo, 1979: 55). The teacher may also want to make the course more relevant to students' interests or to tailor it to fit students' needs better. The teacher may want to emphasize a particular topic, for example, he/she may want to teach English through teaching about an English-speaking culture and thus help his/her students understand the context of the language better.

The teacher may choose to write material for classroom use or to select authentic material, that is, material written by and for native speakers. In either case, there are a number of factors to consider.

1. Students' purposes for studying English

The teacher should keep the students purposes for studying English in mind when selecting or writing materials. Will students be going to an English-speaking country? If so, will they be going there to travel? to study? to attend professional conferences? These possibilities and others should be taken into account. The material should be meaningful to the students in terms of their purpose for studying English.

2. Students' interests

The teacher should also keep the students' interests in mind, since the students will obviously be more motivated to read material that they find interesting and meaningful than material that is boring or that they are unable to relate to. The reading material should contain information that is new to the students. Otherwise, it will not be interesting to them.

3. Literary forms

Reading has traditionally been taught using the essay or narrative form, but reading tests show that students have difficulty with other forms — poetry, dialogue, directions, and so on (Kitao and Miyamoto, 1982). Students should be exposed to a variety of literary forms in reading classes. This is where authentic material can be particularly helpful. With some literary forms, for example, poetry, the teacher will want students to understand the meaning detail. Other literary forms, for example, a menu, the teacher may only want the students to understand in general. It is probably more important for the students to see an English menu and how it is laid out than for them to understand what lasagna is.

4. Bias

The teacher should be careful about using biased material. It is probably better to use unbiased material, unless the emphasis is on critical reading and the teacher is trying to teach students to recognize bias in reading passages. This is a fairly high-level skill, and it is usually only appropriate for more advanced students.

5. Length

The teacher should be careful not to write or select material that is too long. As a general rule, unless the teacher plans to give reading assignments as homework, the reading should be short enough to allow the students to read it three times in class, with enough time left over to do the related exercises and discuss the answers. Length also depends on students' level of reading ability. Lower-level students have difficulty reading long passages, even if they are easy.

6. Difficulty

The passage should be slightly beyond students' reading ability. If it is too easy, students' level of reading ability will not improve; if it is far beyond the students' ability, they will find it too frustrating.

7. Standard English

The passage should be written in standard English, unless the purpose is to teach the students something about a nonstandard dialect. Again, this is usually only appropriate for more advanced students.

A wide variety of authentic material is available to the English teacher. A few types of reading material are listed below.

1. News items about interesting events or issues
2. Advertisements
3. Application forms for a job, a passport, a driver's license, and so on
4. Invitations to parties, weddings, and so on.
5. Menus
6. Letters or postcards
7. Recipes
8. Leaflets and brochures
9. Programs (church, wedding, and so on)
10. Timetables and schedules (radio and TV programs, transportation timetables, and so on)

Vocabulary

Once the teacher has written or selected material, the next task is to pick out the vocabulary words that have to be defined. Which words need to be defined depends, of course, on the level of the students' English. Words that students are unlikely to know should be defined, as well as words or phrases that have a special meaning in context and words that have a special cultural meaning. Depending on the teaching situation, there may be a list of words that the students have learned by a certain academic level. If no such list exists, the teacher should consult a list of words arranged according to frequency and difficulty.

After the teacher has picked out vocabulary words, he/she next defines (not translates) them, using English that students know. An English-English learner's dictionary is helpful.

Skills Necessary for Reading

There are a number of basic skills necessary for reading, depending on the type of material and the purpose of reading. These skills include skimming to get an overall impression, scanning to find specific information, recognizing the main idea, noting details and understanding relationships, understanding the sequence of ideas, visualizing what is being described, and relating what one has read to one's own opinions, previous knowledge, and the opinions of others. The last is not strictly a reading skill, but it is an important skill for a reader to have.

Skimming to Get an Overall Impression

Skimming is a very useful skill which involves reading very rapidly in order to get a general impression of the material. Students can use this skill to look over a chapter quickly before beginning serious study, reading over material quickly to see if it contains the type of information they are looking for, determining the author's point of view without noting specific arguments, and so on.

Scanning to Find Specific Information

Scanning is related to skimming in that the reader reads rapidly, but it is different in that the reader is looking for specific information. This requires the reader to be able quickly to sort out irrelevant material and to focus on what he/she is looking for.

Recognizing the Main Idea of a Selection

One of the most valuable of the basic reading skills is the ability to recognize the main idea of a passage. This involves distinguishing the most important thought from supporting details, examples, etc. In much everyday reading, noting the central idea(s) is all that is necessary, and even when reading a textbook, a student often picks out the main idea(s) before going on to read the passage in detail.

Noting Details and Understanding Relationships

Another valuable skill is the ability to note details. The reader must be able not only to find the details but also to understand the relationships among them and their relationships to the main idea(s) of the passage. Details may explain, illustrate, define, or describe the central idea(s). The reader must be able to understand these relationships and also to pick out the most important details and not be distracted by those that are not important. This skill is especially vital in studying.

Understanding the Sequence of Events or Ideas

In reading, it is important to be able to understand the sequence of events or ideas. This also involves the understanding of cause-effect relationships and following the author's train of thought as he/she moves from one idea to another.

Visualization

When the author describes something physical, the reader must have the ability to visualize it.

Relating What One Has Read to One's Own Opinions, Previous Knowledge, and the Opinions of Others

Beyond being able to get meaning from written material, the reader must also be able to relate what he/she has read to other things — previous knowledge and experience, opinions of others, and so on. While this is not actually a reading skill, it is a very important skill for a reader to have.

Exercises, Their Purposes, and How to Develop Them

There are many types of exercises to help students develop these skills. I will discuss some of these exercises, their purposes and how to develop them. First of all, however, it is important to emphasize that these exercises are for training rather than for testing. The teacher should not only make sure that the students have the right answer, but also help them understand why it is the right answer. For example, if a true/false question is false, the correct answer should be elicited from the student. Doing the exercises also gives the student feedback as to how well he/she understands the reading passage.

Skimming Exercises

Skimming exercises may give students practice in looking for specific information quickly or in getting the main ideas and/or an overview of the reading without reading the passage carefully. They may also prepare the students for later detailed reading and help them learn basic terms used in the passage, so that detailed reading will be easier.

In making skimming exercises, the teacher can ask questions that require students to skim or scan the reading passage. These questions may ask for specific facts or figures or for the main idea of the story or a paragraph or for the layout of the story, depending on what is appropriate for a particular passage and what the teacher wants to teach with the passage.

The following is an example of a skimming exercise that was written for a reading passage on the city of New Orleans and the War of 1812. The first questions make use of scanning — looking for specific information — and the second of skimming — looking for overall information or main ideas.

Look for numbers in the text and answer the following questions.

1. When was New Orleans founded?
2. How much of the present continental United States did the Louisiana colony include?
3. When did the Battle of New Orleans take place?
4. When did the British attack Washington, D.C.?
5. How many British soldiers were killed in the Battle of New Orleans?

Read the passage rapidly and answer the following questions.

1. What is the origin of this passage?
2. What is its main subject?
3. What is the purpose of the broadcast?

For skimming exercises, it is especially important to instruct students not to read slowly and carefully. While they may get the correct answers to the questions, they are not developing the skills that skimming exercises are intended to help them develop. Also, students should be instructed not to use a dictionary or vocabulary list. It is not necessary for them to understand every word. The idea is for the students to find answers to specific questions and/or get an overview of the material.

Comprehension Questions

The purpose of comprehension questions is to help the students find the main idea of the passage or paragraph and the details that support or illustrate the main idea. Depending on the level of the students and the teacher's purpose for a particular passage, the answers to the questions may come directly from the passage or may require the students to make connections between two or more pieces of information. In any case, the answers can be found in the passage itself and do not require any other information or require students to give an opinion.

Comprehension questions may take several different forms. They may be true/false questions, multiple choice questions, short answer questions, and so on.

True/false questions. When making true/false questions, the false statements should be plausible in the context of the reading passage and should be based on some possible misunderstanding of the text. The answers should not fall into a pattern, for example, TFTF or TFFTTFF. Students can pick up the patterns very quickly. It is not necessary to have an equal number of true and false statements; again, if student notice this, they will adjust their answers to fit. Correct statements should paraphrase the reading passage, not repeat it exactly, so that students cannot just match a phrase from the reading passage with a phrase in the question (Rivers and Temperly, 1978).

In addition to "true" and "false" answers, a third possible answer, "don't know," can be included. This can be represented with a "?." It is for statements that include information not included in the passage. This gives a third possible alternative and helps reduce guessing.

The teacher should avoid using such words as "always" and "never," since students who have good test-taking strategies will recognize that statements containing such words are usually false.

Multiple choice questions. Like the false statements in true/false questions, the incorrect alternatives in multiple choice questions should seem logical in the context of the story and should reflect an element that students might have misunderstood. Also, the correct answer should not come directly from the text, so that the students can't identify the correct answer without understanding its meaning (Rivers and Temperly, 1978).

Short answer questions. The type of short answer questions that the teacher makes depends on the level of students' reading ability. For lower-level students, content questions (who, what, when, etc., and yes-no questions) are most appropriate. They require students only to find information from the passage, not to discuss the implications of the information. More advanced students should be asked implication questions (why, if. . .then what, and questions whose answers require more explanation). In order to answer this type of question, the student must put together information from different parts of the passage and think about the implications of what he/she has read in the passage (Rivers and Temperly, 1978).

Chart Exercise

A chart exercise presents a chart which students fill in with information from the reading passage. Some information may be filled in to help orient students.

The purposes of chart exercises are to help students understand the passage as a whole and the relationships among ideas or facts in the passage. Charts also help students analyze the information given to them.

The following chart is from a reading about daily life in a family named Johnson. Some of the information is given to students in the chart. They have to fill in the blanks. For less proficient students, it may be better to indicate which blanks, if any, have no answer.

The Johnson Children's Daily Schedule

Time	*Tyler*	*Katelyn*
7:30	gets up	
8:30		follows her mother around
10:30		
11:30		
1:30		wakes up, has lunch
5:00		
6:00		
8:00		
Bedtime		

Not all passages are appropriate for chart exercises. For a chart exercise to be appropriate, the passage must contain a parallel series of information, because it is such parallel series that charts clarify.

Organization Exercise

In an organization exercise, the students are given several statements from the reading passage and instructed to put them either in the order that they occurred in the passage or, in the case of a narrative or directions, to put them in chronological order.

The purpose of organization exercises is to help students understand the sequence of events or progression of ideas. The exercise becomes a summary of the reading passage when it is finished, and so helps students to understand the development of ideas in the passage.

How an organization exercise is made depends, of course, on the passage. In the case of an essay, the teacher usually makes statements summarizing each paragraph. (In this case, the exercise can also be used to help students understand the function of paragraphs in English.) If the passage is a narrative, the teacher makes statements of each of the major events in the story. In the case of directions, a statement should be made of each step. As with other types of exercises, the statements should paraphrase the passage, not come directly from it.

Organization exercises are particularly effective in the case of narratives when the story is not told in chronological order. For example, it is not unusual for a story to start at one point in time, go back to a previous event, and then go forward to a future event. To understand the story, the reader needs to understand the chronological relationships of the events of the story. An organization exercise is useful to help them do that.

The following example of an organization exercise is from a pancake recipe.

Put the following steps in the order that you would do them if you were making the pancakes.

a. Cook the pancakes until they are golden brown underneath.

b. Set the frying pan over low heat.

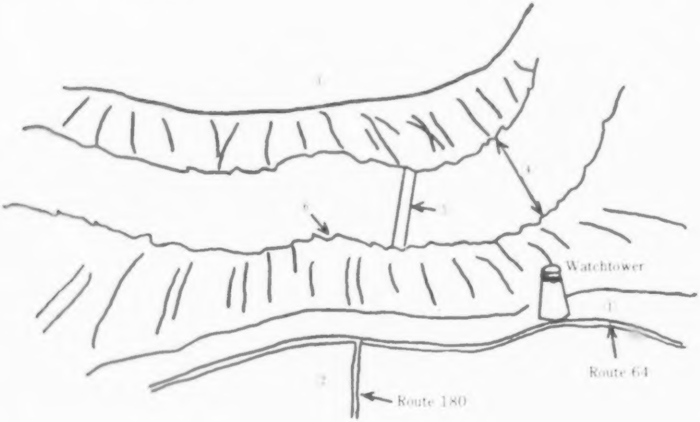
c. Add the egg mixture to the dry ingredients and mix.
d. Brown the pancakes on the underside.
e. Sift the flour, measure it, and then sift the dry ingredients together.
f. Serve with butter and syrup or honey.
g. Beat the egg and add milk and butter.
h. Turn the pancakes.
i. Drop the batter on the hot frying pan.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Visualization Exercise

Visualization exercises can be used to confirm the students' understanding of descriptive vocabulary. The teacher may ask students to draw something described in the story or may provide a picture or diagram and have students label parts of it. The following is an example of the latter, taken from a reading about the Grand Canyon.

Complete the map of the park by writing the names given below next to the numbers.



Cloze Exercise

A cloze exercise is a summary of the reading passage or part of it, with blanks that the students fill in. A cloze exercise helps students understand content, vocabulary, grammar, and structure. It helps the students learn to recognize the same information in a different form and acts as a summary of the passage.

There are two ways of making a cloze exercise. In the classic cloze, at a predetermined interval (usually every fifth, sixth, or seventh word) a blank is substituted for the word. If the teacher wants to emphasize structure and grammar, this is the type of cloze exercise he/she should develop. Since there will be more function words than content words, chances are more blanks will be filled by function words. On the other hand, if the teacher wants to emphasize content and vocabulary, a modified cloze exercise is better. In a modified cloze exercise, the teacher leaves content words or vocabulary words blank.

As a general rule, there should be no blanks in the first or last sentences, to give students a chance to orient themselves. When making a cloze exercise, the teacher should be careful not to leave too many blanks.

Outline Exercise

An outline exercise has an outline of the passage with blanks that the students must fill in. Like the cloze exercise, it helps the students understand content and vocabulary and learn to recognize the same material in a different form. It also helps them see the relative importance of different parts of the material and understand the overall idea. An outline exercise can also be used to teach students how to outline, a skill that will help them learn to pick out the main idea and details in a paragraph and understand the relationships among them.

To make an outline exercise, the teacher outlines the passage, leaving some of the key words blank. As with the cloze exercise, the teacher should be careful not to leave too many blanks.

The following is an outline exercise, taken from a passage about the Battle of New Orleans and its relationship to the history of that city.

Find the words in the text that belong in the blanks.

I. Introduction to the history of New Orleans
A. Founding of New Orleans by the French in ______
B. Sale of Louisiana to Spain in ______
C. Return to Louisiana to France in ______
D. Purchase of Louisiana by the U.S. in ______
II. An event which brought New Orleans closer to the ______
III. About the ______ ______ 1812
A. British attack of ______ ______
B. British attack of ______ ______
1. New Orleans' ______ importance
2. New Orleans' ______ importance
IV. British ______ methods
V. The ______ soldiers
A. From the ______
B. ______ by office workers in New Orleans.
C. ______ by General Andrew Jackson
VI. The ______
1. America's ______
A. The belief that it had helped to ______ ______ ______
B. The ironic fact that a ______ ______ between Britain and America had been signed ______ the battle

Discussion Questions

Discussion questions ask the students' opinions about something in the passage and/or ask the students to relate what they have learned from the passage to their opinions, experience, previous knowledge, and so on. This exercise helps students learn to express themselves in English, to expand on the ideas of the main text, and to gain a deeper understanding of the passage. It also reinforces certain structures and vocabulary and provides meaningful practice of them.

The type of questions the teacher asks depends, of course, on the type of reading passage. It is often a good idea, however, to ask narrow, fairly concrete questions to build up to more general, abstract concepts. If the reading is about an issue, the teacher can ask the students' opinions on that issue, ask them to compare their opinions on the issue, and later ask them about broad principles related to the issue. If the passage is about an English-speaking culture, the teacher can ask students to find various aspects of that culture in the passage and to compare and contrast the English-speaking culture with their own.

As a general rule, the exercises should be arranged with those that require only recognition presented before those that require increasing degrees of production. For example, true/false questions should come before short answer questions. Discussion questions should be last, because they require the greatest amount of production. The exception is the skimming exercise, which should be first.

In conclusion, the teacher who can develop his/her own materials has a great advantage. He/she is better able to meet students' needs – whether the material is used by itself or in conjunction with published material – and is able to take advantage of students' interests to motivate them. "Materials prepared by the classroom teacher who is familiar with the needs and interests of her students are indispensable aids to teaching" (Khoo, 1979: 55).

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(Note: Examples of exercises are from Kitao, Kenji et al., (1982). *An American Sampler*. Kyoto: Japan International Center. The project that this paper is based on was partially funded by Japan Association of Language Teachers research grants in 1980 and 1981.)

9. Teaching Rhetorical Patterns and Transitions in College-Level English Composition Courses

Abstract

Composition is not just a matter of putting well-formed sentences together; it also involves making the relationships within the text clear and arranging ideas according to conventional rhetorical patterns of the target language. Though Japanese students study English for six years in high school, when they reach college, they are not familiar with the concept of rhetorical patterns and transitions in reading or writing English. Many students are not even familiar with the most basic aspects of paragraph writing. They are not familiar with common rhetorical patterns in English or ways of using transitions to make relationships clear among pieces of information.

In this paper, I discuss the importance of teaching rhetorical patterns and transitions in English composition courses. Beginning with paragraphs, the basic unit of written English, I explain the definition of a paragraph and described typical paragraph organization in English (introduction, discussion, and conclusion) and explain how this can be expanded to the organization of longer pieces of writing. I show how transitions are used to make relationships clear among pieces of information. I also list approaches such as cause-and-effect, comparison/contrast, and classification. I show how I teach these concepts, using models of paragraphs and essays.

Though Japanese students study English for six years in high school, when they reach college, they are not familiar with the concept of rhetorical patterns and transitions in reading or writing English. In my experience teaching composition in Japanese colleges and junior colleges, I have found that many students are not even familiar with the most basic aspects of paragraph writing. When students write their first paragraph composition assignment, many of them do not indent the first line of the paragraph, and some start a new line for every sentence. Mistakes like these indicate that students do not have even the most basic concept of paragraphs.

In this paper, I will discuss the teaching of rhetorical patterns and transitions. I will also discuss what should be taught and ways of teaching transitions and rhetorical patterns.

Teaching Composition to Japanese Students

Composition is not merely the process of putting a series of well formed sentences together. It involves making the relationships among the sentences clear and arranging the ideas according to the accepted rhetorical patterns of the target language (Carpenter and Hunter, 1981). Organization shows the relationships among ideas in a reading passage (Pichaske, 1976). However, Japanese students have little exposure to composition in English classes in junior high or high school. What composition teaching they do have usually involves just translating, often only isolated sentences. They are not taught about common rhetorical patterns in English or about using transitions to make relationships among pieces of information easier to understand.

Teaching about rhetorical patterns and transitions is important for two reasons. First, students are not familiar with English rhetorical patterns, which are different from those used in Japanese (Hinds, 1987). In addition, in Japanese writing, there is a tendency to expect the writer to figure out relationships, in contrast to English, where relationships among pieces of information are more likely to be specified. Hinds (1987) distinguished between the "reader-responsible" approach of Japanese writing and the "writer-responsible" approach of English writing. A reader-responsible approach is one in which the writer does not need to give full explanations of his/her views but rather uses hints and depends on knowledge and values shared with the reader for comprehension. In contrast, a writer-responsible approach is one in which the writer is expected to present views clearly and make sure that the reader understands the points the writer is making and their relationships. Mok (1993) rightly warns against dichotomizing these approaches. English writers do depend, to some extent, on shared knowledge, and Japanese writers are, in some cases, explicit. However, since Japanese writers do have a tendency to expect the reader to take a greater responsibility than English readers would expect to take, to understand meaning and relationships, it is logical that Japanese students of composition would need to be helped to make their writing more explicit, to specify relationships more clearly, etc.

D'Angelo (1986) used the metaphor of Chomsky's concepts of grammatical performance and grammatical competence for knowledge of rhetorical patterns and actual composition. He likened a knowledge of typical patterns of organization, for example, cause-and-effect or comparison/contrast, to grammatical competence. Competent writers are familiar with the typical ways of organizing writing in the language in which they write, and they use this knowledge to guide their writing. However, these organizational patterns are not rigid. Writers combine them and use them creatively to fit the particular topic and purpose that they have in mind.

The Use of Models

Using models is an important part of teaching composition. Models are useful in that they provide exposure to lexical items, structural patterns, and modes of rhetorical organization, though they can be misused if too much emphasis is placed on the model for its own sake, on slavishly copying what the writer has done, as opposed to understanding the communicative intent of the rhetorical pattern that is being demonstrated and the devices that the writer uses to carry out the communicative intent (Watson, 1982).

Models are of two basic types — authentic and specifically written. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Models can be specifically written to demonstrate particular points of rhetorical patterns when it might be difficult to find enough authentic examples of a specific point. A teacher or textbook writer can write several paragraphs demonstrating a comparison/contrast approach, for example, but it might be difficult finding several such paragraphs that also stand alone and are easy enough for students to understand. Specifically written models can be made easy enough to be accessible in a way that authentic material might not be. If the students have to struggle to understand the meaning of the reading passage, it will obviously be difficult for them to perceive the rhetorical, lexical, or structural point that the teacher intends to use the model to make. However, specifically written materials can sound artificial, and well-chosen authentic materials can be rich sources of cultural information and can provide students with exposure to a variety of literature from the target culture (Watson, 1982).

Dubin and Olshtain (1980) emphasized the interrelationships between reading and writing, which makes models particularly useful. Written communication is made up of three segments — the writing process, the text, and the reading process. These three segments are usually dealt with separately. The writing process is studied in prescriptive rhetoric and contrastive rhetoric, the text is studied in discourse analysis, and the reading process in psycholinguistics. Dubin and Olshtain argue that understanding the interrelationships among these three areas helps both readers and writers. For readers, it is useful to know what characteristics to expect in the text, how the different parts of the text are tied together, what the conventional rhetorical patterns in a language are, and so on. For a writer, it is important to know these conventions in order to fulfill the reader's expectations in the way that ideas are organized and to make the relationships among the ideas clear. It is also important for the writer to be aware of the audience and to write with the potential audience's expectations, level of knowledge, etc., in mind. Since different languages have different rhetorical conventions, different ways of organizing ideas and marking the relationships among them, students need to learn these for the target language.

Teaching about Rhetorical Patterns

Carpenter and Hunter (1981) developed a series of units to help advanced ESL students learn to use such rhetorical functions as introducing, making generalizations, and concluding. The students (who were already students in regular university classes but who needed remedial writing) first read explanations of the function and its characteristics, including typical words or phrases that signal that function. Students were then assigned to find examples from their own academic reading of the rhetorical functions in question and study them. They also studied examples provided by the teacher and wrote short and then longer essays to put what they learned into practice. While Carpenter and Hunter did not undertake a formal study of the effects of these units on students' writing ability, they felt that the students' writing did improve as a result of these exercises.

Introducing Paragraphs

In approaching the idea of rhetorical organization with students who are not familiar with it, it is useful to start at the level of the paragraph rather than the essay. The paragraph can be thought of as a microcosm of an essay (Rosa and Eschholz, 1992; Bander, 1971). Like an essay, a paragraph should have an introduction, discussion and conclusion. The ideas in a paragraph, like those in an essay, should all be related to the main idea. The sentences have different levels of importance. Thus a paragraph has many of the important characteristics of an essay, but it is shorter, making it easier to demonstrate these characteristics to students.

Teaching students about paragraphs begins with the basics – defining a paragraph and specifying its parts. A paragraph is a group of sentences with one main idea (Dubin and Olshtain, 1980). The main idea is sometimes referred to as the controlling idea, because it controls what is included in the paragraph (Rosa and Eschholz, 1992). All the ideas included in the paragraph should be related to that controlling idea; ideas that are not related to that main idea do not belong in the paragraph.

Introductions, discussions, and conclusions. Paragraphs should have an introduction, discussion, and conclusion. The introduction specifies what the paragraph will be about. The discussion, sometimes called the body, is the main part of the paragraph. In the discussion, the writer elaborates on the main idea specified in the introduction. The conclusion wraps up the paragraph. It may be a simple summary or restatement of the main idea, a practical application of a theoretical argument, a conclusion drawn from the information in the paragraph, etc. (Pichaske, 1975; Sebranek, Kemper, & Meyer, 1987).

After explaining these parts to students using examples, it is useful to have them read model paragraphs and point out the introductions, discussions, and conclusions. Students can be shown two paragraphs that take different approaches to the same general topic, for example, one paragraph describing San Francisco and another comparing San Francisco and Seattle. This demonstrates to students how paragraphs with the same general topic might deal with totally different aspects of that topic.

When first showing sample paragraphs to students, it is important to point out the physical form of the paragraph. The first line of a paragraph is indented. Each sentence follows the previous sentence, rather than starting on a new line. Even though a distinction is made among the introduction, discussion, and conclusion, writers do not start a new line for each of these. Pointing out these characteristics helps students avoid mistakes when they begin writing their own paragraphs — though it may be necessary to point them out more than once. One way of graphically demonstrating what is and is not acceptable for a paragraph is to draw lines on the blackboard and cross out the forms that are not acceptable. Figure 1 shows what a paragraph should look like; Figures 2 and 3 show typical mistakes students make in writing paragraphs.

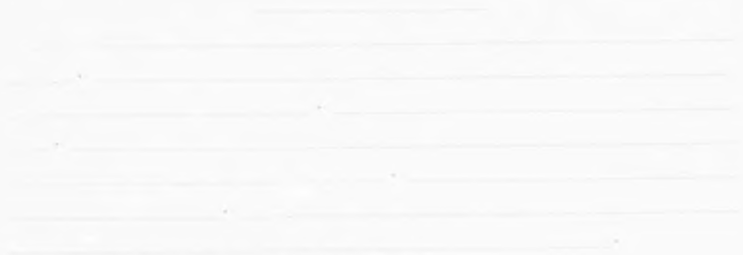

Figure 1. The correct form of a paragraph.

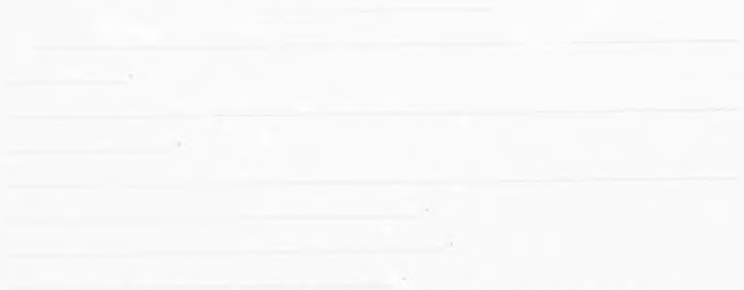

Figure 2. A paragraph in which each sentence starts on a new line.

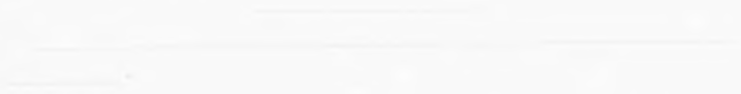

Figure 3. A new line is started for the discussion and conclusion.

Emphasizing the main idea. The concept that paragraphs have only one main idea is one that must be strongly emphasized. One way to help make students aware of this is to give them paragraphs with one or more irrelevant sentences in them. Students read the paragraphs and find the irrelevant sentences, and then explain why they are irrelevant. This exercise can be used when the idea of paragraphs is introduced, and it can be used periodically throughout the composition course to remind students of this important point and to check their comprehension of the main idea of the paragraph. In fact, for every model paragraph or essay that I show students, I use the question of whether there are any sentences that do not belong, and in one paragraph out of three or four, I include one or more irrelevant sentences.

Topic sentences. Topic sentences are another concept that is useful for students. A topic sentence is a sentence that explains the main idea of a paragraph (Bander, 1971). Not every paragraph, of course, has an explicit topic sentence, but it is useful to have students aware of them.

After explaining about topic sentences, teachers can give students a series of exercises to help them understand topic sentences. First, teachers can show the students examples of paragraphs with explicit topic sentences and ask the students to identify them. The first sentence is sometimes the topic sentence, and students have a tendency to choose the first sentence as the topic sentence. Therefore, some paragraphs should be introduced in which the first sentence is not the topic sentence, so that students actually have to make sure they understand what the main idea of the paragraph is, rather than just guessing that the topic sentence is the first one.

The next step would be to leave a blank for the topic sentence and ask students to choose from three or four topic sentences which would be the most appropriate one for that paragraph. The incorrect alternatives in this case should be related to the topic so that they may seem possible. However, they should, for example, be too narrow to cover the main idea of the paragraph or should be on a related area of the topic, but not the one covered in the paragraph that students are presented with. The teacher can ask the students why each incorrect alternative is incorrect and why the correct topic sentence is appropriate. This helps refine students' understanding of topic sentences.

The next step is to give students paragraphs with blanks for the topic sentence and have them propose appropriate topic sentences. After students have written the topic sentences, various topic sentences that have been proposed could be discussed.

Finally, the students would be assigned to write a paragraph and either underline their own topic sentence or have a partner in the class read the paragraph and identify the topic sentence. If the partner finds it difficult to identify the topic sentence, the writer of the paragraph might need to consider what the problem is, whether the topic sentence is not stated clearly or specifically enough, or whether there are sentences in the paragraph that are not related to the topic sentence, making the controlling topic of the paragraph difficult for the reader to identify.

Teaching about types of paragraphs. It is also useful for students to learn about various types of paragraphs (Pichaske, 1975; Bander, 1971; Rosa and Eschholz, 1992; D'Angelo, 1986; Sebranek, Kemper, & Meyer, 1987; Arnaudet and Barrett, 1990). These include description (describing the characteristics of something), narrative (telling a story), personal opinion (expressing an opinion and reasons for it), illustration (a general statement with statistics, further explanation, etc., to support it), classification (dividing people, objects, etc., into groups), analysis (dividing something up into sections), cause-and-effect (considering a cause and discussing its effects; considering an effect and discussing it causes), comparison and contrast (discussing the similarities and differences of people, places, things, etc.), problem/solution (considering a problem and discussing solutions), and instructions (explaining how to do something).

These different types of paragraphs can be introduced to students with explanations of the concepts involved in that type of paragraph. For example, to introduce comparison and contrast paragraphs, the teacher might give students pairs of words and have them write sentences about the similarities and differences between those words. To introduce illustration paragraphs, the teacher might give students a generalization, followed by three statements. Two of the statements should support the generalization and the other one should not. Students have to choose the statement that does not support the generalization. With such exercises, students practice the concepts involved in the paragraphs.

The following are examples of exercises to introduce the concept of generalizations and specifics.

1. Football is popular in the United States.
    ____ 1. Millions of people watch professional football on Sunday afternoons.
    __X__ 2. Baseball is also a popular sport.
    ____ 3. People are willing to pay high prices for tickets to important football games.
2. Reading English newspapers is a useful way of studying English.
    __X__ 1. The English in newspapers is too difficult for most Japanese people.

2. Newspapers have a lot of natural, contemporary English.
3. There is interesting information in newspapers for almost anyone.

Next the paragraphs themselves are introduced, with explanations of what would be in the introduction, discussion, and conclusion, and models to demonstrate these points. For example, in a personal opinion paragraph, the writer's opinion is expressed in the introduction. (The statement of opinion might be introduced by giving a contrasting opinion ["Some people believe. . ."] and then the writer's own opinion.) In the discussion, the writer gives reasons for that opinion – facts, arguments, or supportive data. In the conclusion, the writer restates the opinion, summarizes the reasons for the opinion, or draws a conclusion.

The teacher should give students questions about the paragraph to help them analyze it, i.e., to help them understand the role that each sentence plays in the paragraph. If the paragraph is a personal opinion paragraph, for example, in which sentence is the opinion stated? In which sentence(s) are the reasons for the opinion stated? In which sentence(s) do/does the writer explain the reasons further? In teaching classification paragraphs, the teacher can ask in which sentence the groups are defined, and in which sentences the writer gives more explanation of the groups. The following (Kitao and Kitao, 1992) is an example of a contrast paragraph with such questions, as well as questions about the parts of the paragraph, the topic sentence, and irrelevant sentences.

Paying Compliments

[1]Americans and Japanese differ in several respects in the way they pay compliments. [2]For one thing, Americans often pay a compliment by saying that they like or love something. [3]For example, they might say, "I like your dress," or "I love that ring." [4]However, this type of expression is not common in Japanese as a form of compliment. [5]Another difference is that Japanese sometimes pay compliments by

saying that the object looks expensive. [6]However, this is not a compliment in English. [7]In fact, it might seem impolite in some cases. [8]Still another difference is that Americans pay compliments more frequently than Japanese do. [9]In French, it is insulting to say, "You look nice today." [10]Because of the differences in the ways that they pay compliments, Japanese and Americans need to know about customs in each other's languages.

Write the sentence number(s) in the blank.

1. 1 : sentence(s) in the introduction
2. 2-9 : sentence(s) in the discussion
3. 10 : sentence(s) in the conclusion
4. 1 : topic sentence
5. 9 : sentence(s) that don't/doesn't belong
6. 2,5,8 : sentence(s) that list(s) the differences
7. 3-4 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the first difference
8. 6-7 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the second difference
9. NA sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the third difference

Using Paragraphs to Teach about Essays

After students have learned about the organization of paragraphs, it is possible to apply this knowledge to writing longer pieces of text. One way to teach students to do this is to show them a paragraph and then an essay on the same topic which expands on the ideas in the paragraph. The following (Kitao and Kitao, 1993) is an example.

Boston and the American Revolution

[1]Boston, an American city founded in 1630, has many historical sites associated with the American Revolution, because from its early history, it was a city of cultural and political importance. [2]In fact, it

was called "the Cradle of Liberty" because of its important role in the Revolution. [3]One famous site in Boston is the Old South Meeting House. [4]This was the church where colonists met in 1773 to plan the Boston Tea Party, an act of protest in which they threw tea overboard from a ship rather than pay taxes on it. [5]Another famous site is the *Brig Beaver II*, a copy of the ship from which the colonists threw the tea. [6]In addition, there is the Old North Church. [7]In the tower of this church lanterns were hung to signal riders to warn patriots that the British army was coming. [8]Visitors can also see the home of Paul Revere, a famous patriot and one of the riders who went to warn the patriots. [9]This is the oldest wooden building still standing in Boston. [10]Faneuil Hall, which has been restored as a market, was a meeting place of revolutionary leaders. [11]These are just a few of the many places in Boston associated with the Revolutionary War.

1. 1-2 sentence(s) in the introduction
2. 3-10 sentence(s) in the discussion
3. 11 sentence(s) in the conclusion
4. 1 topic sentence
5. NA sentence that doesn't belong
6. 3,5,6,8,10 sentence(s) that give(s) the illustrations
7. 4 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the first illustration
8. 7 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the third illustration
9. 9 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the fourth illustration

Boston and the American Revolution

(1) [1]Boston is a city with a long and interesting history. It was founded in 1630 by people who came from England, searching for religious freedom. [2]It was an early cultural and political center. [3]Many of the leaders of America's revolutionary period came from the Boston area, so during the mid-1700s, it was a center of revolutionary activ-

ity. [4]In fact, it was called "the Cradle of Liberty" because of its important role in the Revolution. [5]As a result of this role, it has many historical sites associated with the American Revolution.

(2)[6]For instance, two famous sites are the Old South Meeting House and the *Brig Beaver II*. [7]In 1773, the colonists were angry about a tax that had been put on tea by the British Parliament, in which the colonists had no representatives. [8]Some of them met in the Old South Meeting House to decide what to do. [9]Their plan, which they carried out that night, is now known as the Boston Tea Party. [10]The colonists dressed as Indians and went to a ship called the *Brig Beaver*, where they threw the tea, tens of thousands of dollars' worth, over the side of the ship. [11]They did this so that no tax could be paid on the tea. [12]Visitors to Boston today can see the original Old South Meeting House and the *Brig Beaver II*, a copy of the ship from which the colonists threw the tea. [13]These sites remind us of an important event in the revolutionary period.

(3)[14]In addition, there is the Old North Church. [15]It was used to signal riders who went to warn patriots that the British army was coming. [16]In 1775, the patriots were gathering weapons in the towns near Boston. [17]The British army made plans to take away the weapons, but some patriots found out about the plan. [18]Riders prepared to go warn the patriots, but first they waited for signal lanterns in the tower of the church to tell them what route the army would be taking — "one (lantern) if by land, two (lanterns) if by sea." [19]Near the church stands a statue of Paul Revere, one of the riders. [20]This site is another reminder of an important event in the Revolution.

(4)[21]Visitors can also see the home of Paul Revere. [22]Revere, a silversmith, moved to this house in 1770 and lived there for thirty years with his wife and twelve children. [23]This is the oldest wooden building still standing in Boston. [24]It is a large house with a grey exterior and two floors. [25]Inside is furniture from the period when Paul Revere lived there. [26]Visitors can not only see the home of a famous person but also get an idea of how a relatively wealthy person lived during this period in American history.

(5)[27]Faneuil Hall is another building that dates back to the Revolutionary period. [28]Citizens of Boston met there to protest the actions of the British and to make plans about how to respond. [29]The hall was converted into a marketplace in 1826, and it is still a market.

(6)[30]These are just a few of the places associated with the Revolutionary War in Boston. [31]Others include the Old State House, where the Declaration of Independence was first read to the people of Boston; the site of the Battle of Bunker Hill, one of the early battles of the Revolutionary War; and the Granary Burying Ground, where many revolutionary leaders are buried. [32]Boston is a good place to learn about the Revolutionary Era, an important period in American history.

1. 1 paragraph(s) in the introduction
2. 2-5 paragraph(s) in the discussion
3. 6 paragraph(s) in the conclusion
4. 5 sentence which specifies topic of essay
5. 6,14,21,27 sentence(s) that give(s) the illustrations
6. 7-13 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the first illustration
7. 15-20 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the second illustration
8. 22-26 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the third illustration
9. 28-29 sentence(s) that give(s) more explanation of the fourth illustration
10. 6 sentence(s) in the introduction of paragraph 2
11. 7-12 sentence(s) in the discussion of paragraph 2
12. 13 sentence(s) in the conclusion of paragraph 2
13. 6 topic sentence of paragraph 2

Teaching about Transitions

It is also useful for composition students to learn about using transitions. Transitions help writers make the relationships in their writing clearer. There are a variety of topologies for transitions (for example, Robinson and Modrey, 1986; Rosa and Eschholz, 1992; Pichaske, 1975; Sebranek, Kemper, & Meyer, 1987). Generally, transitions are divided into groups according to the type of relationship they specify or the type of information that they introduce. The following is a list of types of transitions, with examples of each type, taken from various other lists (Kitao and Kitao, 1993).

Transitions	Examples
Additional Information	and, furthermore, moreover, in addition, also, too
Expected Information	of course, naturally, as you (may) know, obviously
Unexpected Information	amazingly, surprisingly
Intensified Information	in fact, as a matter of fact
Restatements	in other words, i.e., that is, in short
Examples	for example, for instance, to illustrate, such as, including, include
Consequences	so, and so, therefore, as a result, consequently, (in) consequence, as a consequence
Causes	because (of), due to, as a result (of), on account of, thanks to
Contrasting Information	however, but, although, (even) though, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand
Order	first, second, etc.; then; next; last; finally

Conclusion	in short, therefore, to conclude, in conclusion to summarize, in summary

Teaching about transitions has a number of steps. The first step is to explain what transitions are — words or phrases that specify relationships between pieces of information — and then to introduce types of transitions and examples of each type. It may be overwhelming to introduce too many types of transitions at once, and so it might be better to introduce three to five types at a time over a few classes. Next, students can be given sentences with transitions and asked to find the transition and identify the type. (Alternatively, instead of just giving students lists of types of transitions and examples, the teacher could give students sentences with examples of transitions and have students figure out the relationships between pieces of information and thus what relationship the transition indicates. This could form the basis for lists that students could compile themselves.) They can be given sentences where transitions are omitted and be asked to decide what the relationship is between the pieces of information and fill in the blanks with appropriate transitions.

The same progression of steps can be followed with short reading passages — students identify the types of transitions that are marked in a short passage; find the transitions themselves and identify them; and fill in blanks with appropriate transitions. One further step might be to give students a passage on a familiar topic with the information following the transitions whited out. In that case, the students guess what might follow the transition. Students should understand that the point is not necessarily to predict exactly what information would be found after the transition but rather to think about the relationship indicated and the kind of information that would logically come next.

In learning about transitions, students should not be encouraged to overuse transitions. The emphasis should not be on learning and using as many transitions as possible but rather on understanding the relationship between pieces of information and on using appropriate transitions.

Outlining

Outlining has two major uses in the teaching of composition. It is useful in helping students see the organization of a paragraph or essay and the relative importance of pieces of information. It is also useful in helping them plan their writing.

The traditional use of outlines is in the planning stages of writing and as a guideline for writing. Students can be encouraged to write an outline first to help them organize their own ideas and see what the relationships are, pinpoint where more elaboration might be useful, see what ideas might be combined, and so on. Such points might be easier to see in an outline than in prose form (Pichaske, 1975). However, these outlines should not be considered rigid templates for the finished product but rather one step that provides guidelines in the ongoing process of discovering meaning and developing ways to express it (Sebranek, Kemper, & Meyer, 1987).

Outlines are also useful in helping students see the organization of a paragraph or essay, because they graphically represent the levels of importance of information. The main idea is stated in the title, and the main subsections next to Roman numerals at the left margin. Ideas of decreasing importance are stated next to capital letters, Arabic numerals, small letters, and small Roman numerals, which move gradually to the right. This helps students see clearly which pieces of information are most important and how ideas within the reading passage are related to each other.

When introducing outlines, the teacher can show students an outline and point out the parallels between the outline and the reading passage. The teacher can point out the most important points in the passage and their position in the outline. The teacher can also point out the relationships among more important ideas and their explanations, examples, etc. The teacher can also give students outlines of passages that they have read with blanks, first for individual words in the outline and gradually for longer phrases, until students are required to provide entire lines. The teacher can later work with the entire class in developing an outline of a reading passage that all the students have read, and finally students can write outlines themselves.

Relationship to Process Approaches

Recent research and theory in the teaching of composition has emphasized process-oriented approaches, that is, approaches to teaching that emphasize the process of writing, editing, awareness of the audience, etc. Teaching about rhetorical patterns and transitions does not preclude using process-oriented approaches. Knowledge of rhetorical patterns and transitions, which these activities and exercises help develop, forms the basis for underlying competence. Application of this knowledge can be further developed using process-oriented approaches, such as peer response.

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II. RESEARCH

10. Comprehension of Indirect Requests in English by East Asian Nonnative Speakers

Abstract

The study of linguistics has traditionally focused on isolated phonemes, morphemes, words, and sentences. However, most linguists now agree that grammatical knowledge is only one factor in the comprehension process. Physical setting, context, background knowledge, and sociocultural assumptions also influence the comprehension process. The study of relationships among language, context and meaning is called linguistic pragmatics. In this paper, I discuss various aspects of pragmatic comprehension as it applies to native and nonnative speakers of English. A study of East Asian nonnative English speakers of indirect conventionalized requests is described. Participants were interviewed about their exposure to English (number of hours per week spent in class, speaking with Americans, watching television, etc.), and during the interview, five ostensibly spontaneous conventionalized indirect requests were made. Correlations were calculated among the variables. The results indicated that comprehension of indirect requests is correlated with overall listening comprehension but not with other factors. Directions for future research were discussed.

Review of Literature

The traditional focus of linguistics has been the study of isolated phonemes, morphemes, words, and sentences. Most linguists agree now, however, that grammatical knowledge is only one of several factors of the comprehension process. Other factors include physical setting, context, background knowledge, and sociocultural assumptions (Gumperz, 1977).

As Grice (1957) and Searle (1971) pointed out, there may be a difference between what is meant by a particular sentence (*sentence meaning*) and what a speaker means by that sentence when it is spoken in a particular context (*speaker meaning*). An utterance may include meaning that cannot be accounted for by the grammatical structure. For example, a sergeant who asks a private, "Do you see that cigarette butt there, soldier?" wants the cigarette butt picked up (speaker meaning), not an answer to that explicit question (sentence meaning). The soldier who answered the question without following the implied order would be considered insolent, even though nothing in the literal meaning of the question includes an order to pick up the cigarette butt.

In this paper, I will discuss speech act theory and how it applies to learners of English. I will also report on a study on East Asian nonnative speakers' ability to understand requests in context and various correlates of that ability.

Definition of Linguistic Pragmatics

Linguistic pragmatics is "the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding" (Levinson, 1983). This implies that comprehension involves more than understanding words and syntax. Pragmatics is the study of comprehension of meaning not included in the grammatical form.

Speech Act Theory

One of the major theories in the field of linguistic pragmatics is speech act theory (Searle, 1979). Speech act theory deals with things people actually do when they speak, including requesting, suggesting, complaining, and inviting. A *speech act* can be defined as the minimal unit of speaking that can be said to have a function

(Richards, 1980).

Speech act theory distinguishes between locutionary and illocutionary acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979). A *locutionary act* is what is said; an *illocutionary act* is what is meant. This distinction is similar to the distinction between sentence and speaker meaning. For the sentence "It's hot in here," the locutionary meaning is a comment about the temperature, but the illocutionary meaning may be a request to turn on the air conditioner.

Another distinction made by speech act theorists is between direct and indirect speech acts. A *direct speech act* is an act in which the locutionary and illocutionary force are the same. An *indirect speech act* is one in which they are different. For example, "Please close the door" would be a direct speech act, since the locutionary and illocutionary force are the same. The request "Can you close the door?" would be an indirect speech act, since the locutionary force is a question about the hearer's ability to close the door, while the illocutionary force is a request to close the door.

The inferential process. In comprehension, H must decide whether the illocutionary force of utterance is the same as the locutionary force, and if they are different, what the illocutionary force is. To illustrate this, Searle (1975: 33) used the following example:

> Student A: Let's go to the movies tonight.
> Student B: I have to study for an exam.

Student A's utterance is a proposal in which the locutionary force and illocutionary force are the same (direct speech act), by virtue of the use the word *Let's* in particular. In most sentences (e.g., "Let's eat pizza,") "let's" indicates a proposal. Student B's utterance, however, would be taken as a refusal even though there is nothing in the meaning of "I have to. . ." that indicates a refusal in the sense that "Let's. . ." indicates a proposal.

Searle (1979: 34-35) described the steps that Student A would go through unconsciously to derive the illocution of B's utterance.

Since A's statement was a proposal, A would assume that B's response must be one of rejection, further discussion, acceptance, etc. However, A's utterance, taken literally, was not one of these. Therefore, A would assume B meant more than he said, and the illocutionary meaning is different from the locutionary meaning. B knows that studying for an exam and going to a movie both take a large amount of time relative to a single evening, so B probably cannot do both in one evening. Since acceptance of a proposal is predicated on ability to perform the act, and since B has said something that indicates he cannot perform the act, the illocutionary meaning of the utterance is probably to reject the proposal.

As Searle also points out, some indirect speech acts have become conventionalized. For example, "Can you open the window?" has become a conventionalized request, even though nothing in the grammar of the sentence makes it a request. In other situations, "Can you open the window?" might be a suggestion or a question about H's ability, but in the absence of clues to the contrary, it would likely be interpreted as a request (Raskin, 1986). The illocutionary force of even conventionalized requests is, according to Searle, determined by H, using a series of unconscious inferences similar to the ones that Searle detailed for the reply to the proposal about going out to the movies.

Other theorists have posited that for conventionalized utterances, it is not necessary to go through these steps to arrive at the illocutionary force (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). Ervin-Tripp maintained that for conventionalized forms, the conventionalized meaning is assumed unless it does not fit the context. In such cases, it is not necessary for H to go through the steps that Searle described. According to Ervin-Tripp, only if the conventionalized meaning does not fit the context does H resort to the inferential process.

Pragmatics and Second Language Learners

It is widely recognized that learning a second language involves much more than being able to understand the sounds, grammar and vocabulary of the second language (Fraser, 1978). It also involves the ability to comprehend and use language in real communication situations. However, there has been relatively little theorizing or research on how nonnative speakers comprehend indirect speech acts in their second language (Kasper, 1984; Conrad, 1984).

Illocutionary force, even when it is different from locutionary force, sometimes seems so obvious to native speakers that the possibility of misunderstanding may seem unlikely. However, nonnative speakers do sometimes misunderstand. For example, a Chinese dinner guest, asked if she could reach the salt, replied, "Yes, my arms are long" (personal communication, J. DeCarrico, July, 1984).

Kasper (1984) found that nonnative speakers in their second language tended to try to interpret the meanings of speech acts without using the context, which would have helped in interpretation of illocutionary force. Nonnative speakers therefore tended to assume that sentence meaning and speaker meaning were the same and had difficulty making inferences about speaker meaning. Kasper speculated that at least part of the reason is that traditional methods of language teaching (those that focus on linguistic forms rather than communicative functions) deal mainly with individual sentences. Even functional approaches, which emphasize the difference between form and function, generally deal with conventionalized forms.

Faerch and Kasper (1985) recommended that second language education include the pragmatic component of communicative competence as a teaching goal. They also recommend facilitating the activation of native language pragmatic knowledge to help second language speakers.

Research Questions

In this study, I looked at the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between comprehension of indirect requests and overall comprehension of English?

2. What factors influence proficiency in comprehension of indirect requests?
3. Are nonnative speakers able to benefit from the context in comprehension of conventionalized requests?

Methods

Overview

In this study, I looked at correlates of the development of ability of East Asian nonnative English speakers to understand conventionalized indirect requests. I also looked at the relationship between the ability to understand indirect requests and the ability to understand information-gathering questions.

Participants were interviewed about the amount of exposure that they had to English, including the amount of time spent in class, the amount of time spent speaking with native English speakers, and the amount of time spent watching television. During the course of the interview, five ostensibly spontaneous requests were made of the interviewee, and the interviewee's ability to comprehend the requests was assessed.

Participants

Participants were sixty-two students from China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. (The tape of the interview with one participant was inaudible, and this participant was eliminated from the analyses.) They were students either in the English Language Center (ELC) at Michigan State University or the Haslett Adult Education Program (HAEP). The students from the ELC were either preparing to enter regular university classes or had begun to take university classes in addition to the English language classes. The HAEP students were mostly wives of students. A few were university students or working people.

Participants from China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan were used because of the similarities in their educational backgrounds. In all four countries, English education lasts from five to eight years and emphasizes the grammar-translation method. Also, in their own countries, participants would have had little opportunity to interact with native English speakers and little other exposure to native English. Last, none of the three native languages are related to English, so they would be of little help in comprehending English.

Procedure and Stimulus Materials

Participants were interviewed individually by a confederate. As much as possible, male participants were interviewed by a male interviewer, and female participants by a female interviewer. However, scheduling did not always allow this. The interviewer's questions were scripted (see Appendix A). They included questions about what country the interviewee came from and how much time he/she spent in class, talking with Americans, and watching television. Interviewees were also questioned about whether they had visited other English-speaking countries or lived with an English-speaking family.

Five times during the interview, the interviewer made conventionalized indirect requests, the meaning of which would be supported by the context. At the beginning, the interviewer's and interviewee's chair were too far apart for normal conversation, and the interviewer was closer to the tape recorder. Before beginning the interview, the interviewer gestured to a point closer to his/her chair and said, "Why don't you move your chair closer?" After asking for the interviewee's name, the interviewer said, "Would you spell that for me?" About halfway through the interview, a confederate interrupted and said, "I need to see you when you're finished," and left the door open. The interviewer then said, "Would you mind closing that door?" Later, the interviewer pretended to make an error in writing an answer, tried to erase the error, and found there was no eraser on the pencil. Looking around for an eraser, he/she sees one on a table near the interviewee and says, "Could I ask you to give me that eraser?" At the end of the interview, the interviewer looks at his/her wrist and says, "I forgot my watch. Do you know what time it is?"

The interview was pretested with two Japanese students and small adjustments in procedure and content were made.

Measurement

Comprehension of indirect requests. For each indirect request, interviewees' responses were rated on a scale from 0 to 4. If the interviewee began to respond within two seconds, he/she received a score of 4. If the interviewee began to respond within three or four seconds, he/she scored 3. If the interviewee requested clarification, he/she scored 2. If the interviewee did not respond within four seconds, the interviewer repeated the request. If the interviewee responded at that time, he/she scored 1. If not, he/she scored 0. To arrive at a score for ability to comprehend indirect requests, the scores for the five requests are summed and divided by five.

Exposure to English. Answers to questions about amount of time spent in class, watching television, going to movies, and interacting with Americans were converted into hours per week. The number of hours per week were summed for a total exposure score.

Ratings of listening comprehension. Coders listened to tapes of the interviews and rated the listening ability of the interviewee according to a six-point scale (see Appendix B) from 5 (Comprehension ability as good as a native English speaker) to 0 (Does not understand some questions. Responds inappropriately or not at all to several questions.) Coders were instructed to make their judgments based only on ability to comprehend information-gathering questions and to listen to the entire interview before making a rating.

Results

Consistency Checks

Gender of interviewer by gender of participant. It was originally intended that a female interviewer interview female participants and a male interviewer interview male participants. However, because scheduling did not always allow this, it was necessary to check to see if interviewees paired with an opposite sex interviewer did differently than those paired with a same sex interviewer. Gender of the interviewer and of the participant were used as independent variables and total score for comprehending requests as the dependent variable in a 2 x 2 analysis of variance. No significant main or interaction effects were found. Therefore, interviews with opposite sex interviewers and same sex interviewers did not yield significantly different results in the scores for comprehension of requests.

Comparison of the programs. To find enough participants, it was necessary to use students in two different language programs. The programs were different in that the ELC program emphasized preparation for academic work, while the HAEP was more general.

Comparisons were made among students from the programs to see if they could be combined for analysis. Program and listening comprehension (using a median split) were used as independent variables in a 2 x 2 ANOVA with comprehension of requests as the dependent variable. A main effect was found for listening comprehension (df = 1,58; F = 6.99; $p < .05$), but there was no main effect for the program (df = 1,58; F = 2.187; $p > .05$) and no interaction effect (df = 1,58; F = 1.55; $p > .05$). Students from different programs did not score differently in responding to the requests.

Comparisons of male and female interviewees. Comparisons were also made between male and female interviewees. An ANOVA using gender and listening comprehension (with a median split) as independent variables and comprehension of requests as a dependent variable showed a main effect for listening comprehension but no main effect for gender and no interaction effect. Males and females did not score differently in responding to the requests.

Comparisons among countries. An ANOVA using country and listening comprehension as independent variables and comprehension of requests as the dependent variable showed a main effect for listening comprehension (df = 1,54; F = 10.54; $p < .05$) but none for country (df = 3,54; F = 2.09; $p > .05$) and no interaction effect (df = 3,54; F = 1.09; $p > .05$). Students from different countries did not score differently.

Reliabilities

Chronbach's alpha for ratings of listening comprehension was .93 and .68 for comprehension of requests. Chronbach's alpha was not calculated for exposure to English, because the factors that made up total exposure to English (sum of the hours per week spent in class, watching television, talking with Americans, and watching movies) would not be correlated.

Other variables used single measures, so reliabilities could not be estimated.

Correlations Among Variables

Cumulated exposure. Pearson correlations among score for requests, listening comprehension ratings, hours of exposure to English per week, and length of time spent in English-speaking countries, with corrections for attenuation of correlations with comprehension of requests and listening comprehension, appear in Table 1.

Significant correlations were found between exposure and comprehension of requests, listening comprehension and exposure, and listening comprehension and comprehension of requests. However, second order partial correlations, which appear in Table 2, indicate that the correlation between exposure to English and comprehension of requests is spurious, caused by the correlation both have with listening comprehension. Listening comprehension and length of stay in English-speaking countries had significant second order partial correlations with comprehension of requests.

Table 1 – Pearson correlations among variables

	Request	Listening Comprehension	Length
Exposure	.27 * (.33)*	.36 * (.37)*	.05
Request		.67 * (.84)*	.20 (.21)
Listening Comprehension			.05 (.06)

( ) = corrected for attenuation
* = $p < .05$
Request = comprehension of requests
Listening Comprehension = ratings of listening comprehension
Length = number of months in English-speaking countries
Exposure = number of hours of exposure to English per week

Table 2 – Second order partial correlations with comprehension of requests

	Exposure	Listening Comprehension	Length
Request	-.09	.82*	.29*

* = $p < .05$

The partial correlation between listening comprehension and amount of exposure with length of time in English-speaking countries held constant was .48 ($p < .05$). The partial correlation between listening comprehension and length of time in English-speaking countries with exposure to English held constant was -.20 ($p > .05$). Correlations between comprehension of requests and other variables appear in Table 3. The amount of time spent in class and the amount of time spent talking with Americans are both positively correlated with listening comprehension. Amount of time spent in class was negatively correlated with length of time spent in English-speaking countries. Amount of time spent talking with Americans and seeing movies were both positively correlated with amount of time spent in class, and amount of time spent seeing movies was also positively correlated with amount of time spent talking with Americans.

Table 3 – Pearson correlations among variables

	List. Comp.	Length	Class	Talk with Am.	TV	Radio	Movies
Request	.67*	.14	.19	.19	.12	.11	-.04
	(.84)*	(.17)	(.23)	(.23)	(.14)	(.13)	(-.05)
List.		-.05	.42*	.30 *	.10	-.01	.10
Comp.		(-.05)	(.44)*	(.31)*	(.10)	(-.01)	(.10)
Length			-.22*	.07	.15	.01	-.19
Class				.42*	-.20	-.01	.24*
Talk with Am.					-.07	.19	.29*
TV						-.11	-.10
Radio							-.13

( ) = corrected for attenuation

* = $p < .05$

Fifth order partial correlations with comprehension of requests appear in Table 4. Only listening comprehension is significantly correlated with comprehension of requests.

Table 4 — Fifth order partial correlations with scores on five requests

	Length	Radio	TV	Talk	Movies	List.
			with Am.		Comp.	
Request	.22	.16	.04	-.07	-.06	.84*

Fifth order partial correlations with ratings of listening comprehension appear in Table 5. The amount of time spent talking with Americans is significantly correlated with listening comprehension.

Table 5 — Fifth order partial correlations with ratings of listening comprehension

	Length	Radio	TV	Talk with Am.	Movies	Class
Listening Comprehension	-.10	-.06	.13	.33*	-.01	.35*

Fifth order partial correlations were calculated between length of time in English-speaking countries and six other variables: listening comprehension and time spent watching television, listening to the radio, attending class, going to movies, and talking with Americans. Of these correlations, only amount of time spent talking with Americans had a significant correlation with length of time in English-speaking countries ($r = .27$; $p < .05$).

Staying with English-speaking families. An ANOVA using listening comprehension and living with an English-speaking family as independent variables and listening comprehension and ability to comprehend requests as dependent variables were calculated. Living with an English speaking family did not have a significant effect on either ability to comprehend requests or on general listening comprehension. However, only eleven of the subjects had had this experience, and most of these had stayed with English-speaking families for less than a week. This makes it difficult to assess the effects of the intense exposure to English that living with an English-speaking family would allow.

Discussion

Reliabilities

Listening comprehension. Ratings of listening comprehension were highly reliable, with an alpha of .93. (In addition, correlations among raters averaged .80.)

Comprehension of requests. Alpha for the five requests was .68, which appears to be moderately reliable, especially for a five-item measure. However, this apparent reliability was caused, in part, by a ceiling effect caused by the fact that the requests were rather easy for the participants in this study. (Forty percent of the interviewees had perfect scores for comprehension of requests.) The item that appeared to be least reliable was the first one (Could I ask you to move your chair closer?) The problem with this may have been caused in part by the fact that the context was somewhat less clear than for other questions. Chairs were set up uncomfortably far apart for normal conversation, and the interviewee was much further away from the tape recorder than the interviewer. However, interviewees may have assumed that the chairs were already the way that the interviewer wanted them, and therefore did not anticipate from the context that the chairs should be closer together.

In other questions, interviewees probably got too much information from the context or depended on past experience. For example, some respondents began to spell their names before the interviewer asked for the spelling, probably because they were accustomed to being asked to do so. Also, the interviewers reported that when they tried to erase an error and found that they didn't have an eraser on the pencil, some interviewees were already looking for an eraser before they could make the request. These items may have been too easy, because they were so obvious from the context that the spoken request was almost unnecessary.

Single-item measures. Length of stay in the US, exposure to English from different sources, etc., were all measured with single items. Some of these are probably reported fairly accurately, i.e., it is likely that interviewees could accurately report the length of their stay in the US and how many movies they saw, on the average, per week. However, such questions as the average amount of television watched per day or the average amount of time spent speaking with native English speakers might be more difficult to estimate.

Correlations Among Variables

Correlations with comprehension of requests. Correlations among comprehension of requests, exposure to English, ratings of listening comprehension, and length of stay in English-speaking counties indicated that there is a strong correlation between listening comprehension and comprehension of requests. Sixty-four percent of the variance in comprehension of requests was explained by proficiency in listening comprehension.

This finding may be relevant in relation to the debate about whether hearers go through the process that Searle (1979) described when attempting to comprehend the illocutionary force of conventionalized forms of indirect speech acts. It appears that, at least for second language learners, comprehension of conventionalized indirect request forms is related to proficiency in listening comprehension, rather than a process of inference. It is not clear, however, whether the conventionalized request form is any aid to comprehension, that is, whether second language speakers note the conventionalized form and realize that what it marks is a request or whether they only listen for the request itself.

Length of time in English-speaking countries was correlated with comprehension of requests, though there was no significant correlation with exposure. One explanation might be that, over time, nonnative English speakers in an English-speaking country absorb conventionalized forms for various functions, even with relatively little exposure to English. Interestingly, length of time spent in English-speaking countries is not similarly correlated with listening comprehension.

Correlations with listening comprehension. Students with greater exposure to English were rated better in listening comprehension, according to the partial correlations. There is no way to make causal statements based on this result. Either nonnative speakers who have good listening proficiency seek out greater exposure to English, or being exposed to English more improves listening comprehension. I would speculate that there is a reciprocal relationship. As exposure increases, listening comprehension improves; as listening comprehension improves, nonnative speakers seek out exposure to English.

Correlations with types of exposure to English. Listening comprehension was significantly correlated with the amount of time spent talking with Americans. Again, no causal statements can be made about this relationship based on this result. However, it may be again that the two variables have a reciprocal relationship. As listening comprehension improves, nonnative speakers feel more confident in interacting with Americans and even seek them out; as they have more interaction with native speakers, their comprehension improves and they feel more and more confident about interacting with Americans.

However, this relationship does not seem to hold for mediated exposure to English. Listening comprehension is not significantly correlated with either television viewing or movie attendance. One possible explanation is that although trying to interact with a native English speaker when one does not comprehend English well is threatening, watching television or a movie does not involve the same kind of threat. Therefore, it may be that mostly nonnative speakers of higher levels of proficiency seek out native speakers, but nonnative speakers of different levels seek out mediated sources of

English.

Exposure and length. One assumption of these analyses is that exposure to English is fairly consistent over time. Results indicated that only the amount of time spent talking with Americans was correlated with the amount of time spent in English-speaking countries. While this does not necessarily show that exposure to English is static for individuals, it does indicate that, for the group as a whole, only interaction with Americans was influenced by the amount of time spent in English-speaking countries.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that it only applies to nonnative English speakers from China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Nonnative speakers from other countries, where the native language is related to English, or where English is used more in every day life, or where the educational system emphasizes spoken English, might produce different results.

Another limitation is that all interviewees were students receiving formal instruction in English language. This affects the sample in at least two ways. First, the range of listening comprehension proficiency was restricted on both ends. On one end of the proficiency scale, nonnative speakers who had completed their formal training in English language, or who were already proficient in English when they arrived in the US, were excluded. On the other end of the scale, nonnative speakers who had not taken English classes and had very low proficiency in English were excluded. Second, the sample only included nonnative speakers who, for whatever reason, were interested in improving their English proficiency. Nonnative speakers who were not interested in improving their English were excluded from the sample.

Another limitation is that the study made use of only conventionalized requests. It did not involve other functions or indirect requests in forms that have not become conventionalized and which therefore depend entirely on the context. As a result, the tasks were relatively easy for this sample. Using a sample with lower English proficiency or using unconventional forms may yield different results.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study dealt with only one speech act, requests, and only with conventionalized forms. Future studies can be done on other speech acts and on forms of requests that have not been conventionalized. Using less conventional forms would give more of an idea of nonnative English speakers' ability to draw inferences in English. It would also be interesting to study the relationship between understanding conventionalized forms in isolation and understanding them in context. This may shed light on the question of the degree to which nonnative speakers at different levels of proficiency make use of context in the comprehension process.

Another area of research would involve language teaching methodology. A number of vital questions deal with how students of English might best be taught to use and understand functions in English. In my experience, most functional approaches teach conventionalized forms. They do not teach students to deal with unconventional forms. Will classroom instruction help them learn to draw these inferences? If this can be taught in the classroom, what methods of instruction would be most effective? Answers to these and other questions would improve the ability of teachers to help students improve their communication in English as a second language.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Hi, my name is __________. Please sit down.

I'm going to ask you a few questions about your country and your experiences in the United States. (With a gesture indicating a spot on the floor closer to his/her own chair) Why don't you move your chair closer? (If the participant does not respond appropriately, the interviewer repeats the request; if the participant still does not respond, the interviewer goes on to the first question.

* First of all, what is your name? (Interviewer poises pencil above paper and hesitates; looks back up at participant) Would you spell that for me? (If the participant does not respond appropriately, the interviewer repeats the request; if the interviewee does not respond appropriately, the interviewer writes down the name as best he/she can.)

* Where are you from? Where in (China/Japan/Korea/Taiwan) are you from? What is that part of (China/Japan/Korea/Taiwan) famous for?

* How long have you been in the United States?

* What have you been doing since you've been here in the United States?

** How many hours a week do you spend in classes?

* How many of these are ELC classes? (A confederate interrupts and asks to speak with the interviewer when he/she is finished.) (glancing at the open door) Would you mind closing that door? (If the participant does not respond appropriately to the request, the interviewer will repeat it once. If the participant still does not respond appropriately, the interviewer will close the door.)

* How many American or Canadian friends do you have?

** On the average, how much time do you spend talking with Americans each day?

* Have you ever stayed with an American family? If so, for how long? (Interviewer pretends to make a mistake in filling out the response form;

pointing with the pencil at eraser placed on table near the participant) Could I ask you to give me that eraser? (If the participant does not respond appropriately to the request, the interviewer will repeat it once. If the participant still does not respond appropriately, the interviewer will get the eraser.) (Interviewer erases a response and writes something else.)

** How much time do you spend watching television each day? What kind of programs do you watch?

** How often do you go to movies? What kinds of movies do you like?

** How many hours do you spend listening to the radio each day? What do you listen to on the radio?

* Have you ever been to any other English-speaking country? If so, what country? For how long?

** How long did you spend each day talking to the people there in English?

* Did you stay with an English-speaking family there? If so, for how long? (Interviewer glances at his/her own wrist, which does not have a watch on it.) I forgot my watch. Do you know what time it is? (If the participant does not respond appropriately, the interviewer repeats the request once. If the participant does not respond appropriately, the interviewer thanks the participant for the information and closes the interview.)

* necessary to get an answer

** necessary to get an answer that can be converted to hours/week

Appendix B

CODING SCHEME

Your task is to determine the nonnative English speaker's ability to *comprehend* spoken English. Do not pay attention to grammatical errors, pronunciation, or any other facet of production, except as they indicate the subject's comprehension of English. Also, only take into account answers to information-gathering questions, not requests.

5 Seems to understand everything at native English rate of delivery. Little or no pause between question and answer. Comprehension ability

as good as a native English speaker.

4 — Understands nearly everything spoken at native English rate or nearly native English rate, but may pause occasionally between question and answer, indicating that a little effort is necessary to comprehend the meaning of the question. Did not require repetition more than twice.

3 — Understands much of what is said at slower than normal delivery and with some repetitions and simplification. Noticeable pauses between questions and answers. May respond inappropriately to one or two questions.

2 — Understands with difficulty most of what is said at slower than native English rate. Requires repetition and simplification. May respond inappropriately.

1 — Understands what is said only with great difficulty. Requires many repetitions and simplifications. Was not able to respond appropriately to some questions.

0 — Does not understand some questions. Responds inappropriately or not at all to several questions.

11. Preparation for and Results of a Short-Term Overseas Study Program in the United States

Abstract

In the summer of 1992, Doshisha Women's Junior College students went to Mary Baldwin College for a short-term overseas program for the first time. The students had an orientation class that met 12 times, during the spring semester, including an overnight session at a hotel. In late July, they went to Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, where for three weeks, they had classes in English language and American culture. They also had field trips to various local sites. After three weeks, they had a four-day homestay and then traveled for ten days.

In this paper, I look briefly at other studies of students going overseas. I discuss the Mary Baldwin College program for the junior college students in 1992. I described the students' preparation, the reasons they wanted to going the program, the effects of the program on students' language proficiency and image of the United States, and the students' comments about their experiences. Finally, I discuss students' suggestions for future programs.

Doshisha Women's College has been sending students overseas for a summer program since 1982. At that time, students of the four-year college went to Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, and traveled in the United States. After the junior college was established in 1986, a summer program was established for junior college students with Warwick University in Britain. In 1992, junior college students went to both Mary Baldwin College and Warwick University for the first time.

In this paper, I look briefly at other studies of students going overseas. I discuss the Mary Baldwin College program for the junior college students in 1992 and describe the students' preparation, the reasons they wanted to join the program, the effects of the program on students' language proficiency and their image of the United States, and the students' comments about their experiences. Finally, I discuss suggestions for future programs from the students.

Overseas Study

Although many Japanese students go overseas for study, either short term or long term, there has been relatively little study of these students, their preparation, or the results of the students' experience overseas (Yashima and Viswat, 1991).

It is difficult to compare the studies that have been done of Japanese students going overseas, because of the widely different populations and situations that they involve. Studies that have been done include Yashima and Viswat (1991), which looked at changes in the image of the United States for Japanese high school students who spent a year studying in the United States; and Higuchi, Saito, Lamarche, Shelangouski, and Kikuchi (1982) which looked at junior college students who were in Canada for a homestay experience. In both cases, the image that the students had of the host country deteriorated, and after their experience, they considered the people of the host country less friendly, less warm, less polite, less reliable, less kind, etc. However, in spite of being somewhat less positive, the participants' images of the host countries were still relatively positive, and the researchers concluded that the students' images had become somewhat more realistic through their experiences.

A study of a short-term program by Nozaki (1987) indicated that students' image of Americans became significantly more positive after a short stay in the United States on 14 out of 28 items: honesty, generosity, intellectual curiosity, sense of responsibility, warmheartedness, impartiality, diligence, kindness, prudence, politeness, cleanliness, morality, trustworthiness, and peaceableness. Students' images did not become more significantly negative on any item. Nozaki also looked at changes in the students' images of Japan, but found no significant differences.

The Overseas Orientation Course

In sending students overseas, no matter what their country of origin and host country, orientation is extremely valuable. Studying overseas is "potentially one of the most broadening and maturing educational experiences that a young person can have." However, "merely sending young people to live abroad for a while does not guarantee that they will learn a great deal more than if they remained at home" (Grove, 1989, p. xi). While Grove was referring to long-term programs, orientation is also important to the success of short-term programs.

Choosing Participants

Students were chosen in late April 1992 for the Mary Baldwin College program from a pool of 115 applicants from Doshisha Women's Junior College for the MBC program and the program at Warwick University. Students were chosen based on questions in English and Japanese about themselves and their goals for going overseas, a multiple-choice quiz about American history and culture, and an interview. In the interview, which was conducted in both English and Japanese, students were rated according to their English proficiency, their goals for the program, and how responsible they seemed to be.

Thirty-four students were chosen by this process. All of the students were first-year students in the junior college, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty years old. Six were Japanese majors and the remainder were English majors. One student had lived in

Malaysia for three years, one had been in the United States for a 25-day homestay, and three had been overseas on vacation for less than one week. One student dropped out of the program in June and was not replaced, so thirty-three students participated in the program and made the trip.

The Overseas Orientation Course

The orientation class met twelve times between early May and late July, including an overnight session at a hotel. It was taught by one full-time faculty member, with the assistance of a staff member. The importance of attendance was stressed, and there were only two absences during the course.

Several types of preparation were combined in the orientation. There were two textbooks, *Communicating with Americans: Functions in English* (Kitao and Kitao, 1991) and *Background to the USA* (Musman, 1982). In addition, two unpublished manuscripts, *Travel English* (Kitao and Kitao, 1992a) and *Travel Expressions* (Kitao and Kitao, 1992b), were used. (The former was later published as Kitao, S. K. and Kitao, K. [1993], and the latter was published as Kitao, K. and Kitao, S. K. [1993].) I will discuss each of these textbooks individually and how they were used.

Communicating with Americans. This book takes a functional approach to the teaching of English. There are chapters on such functions as greeting, complimenting, agreeing and disagreeing, requesting, complaining, and expressing appreciation. It has model dialogues, explanations of cultural differences between Japanese and English, and many examples of expressions for performing functions and responding to them.

Students were assigned to answer the true/false and short answer questions from two or three chapters per week as homework. In class, students did role plays using the functions that were covered that week. For the first six weeks, students did their role plays with other students; for the rest of the course, they did their role plays with the teacher.

Background to the USA. This is a general book on American culture. Students were assigned to read and answer short answer questions about two chapters a week. Chapters were chosen that seemed more relevant to their experience in the United States, particularly to the cities that they would be visiting and the periods of American history that would be relevant to the places they would be visiting.

Travel English* and *Travel Expressions. These two manuscripts were organized around situations that travelers in the United States face. These situations include being on an airplane, in a post office, or at a hotel. In *Travel English*, each of these situations is explained along with the behaviors expected in them. There were true/false questions at the end of each chapter. Students were assigned to read and answer the questions on two to three chapters each week.

Travel Expressions addresses the same situations as *Travel English*, providing expressions and sample dialogues related to those situations. Students were assigned to read through the expressions and dialogues, though these were not used directly in class until role plays were done at the end of the class.

Student group presentations. Groups of students did presentations on various useful topics — packing and traveling, health and safety, talking about Japanese culture in English, American education, homestay, and so on — and on each of the places they would be visiting — Virginia, New York, Boston, Niagara Falls, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

Other. In addition, students saw videos in class about two of the places they would be visiting during their time in the US. They were also given handouts with information about various practical aspects of the trip, for example, how to act during their homestay. There was also an opportunity to see a video from last year's program at MBC and to ask questions of last year's participants.

Journals. Students were required to keep journals during the orientation and to continue to keep them during the trip. They were asked to write about how they were preparing for the trip, what their impressions of the United States were before they left and after they had been there, and what they did in the United States. Though they were assigned to write one page per week during the orientation and two pages per week during the trip, most students wrote much more. Direct quotations in this paper are from students' journal entries.

Students' compliance. A large amount of homework was assigned, but compliance was very high. Few of the students ever failed to turn in their homework assignments.

Students' Preparation Outside of Class

According to their responses to the questionnaire described below, most students did additional preparation for their overseas trip. The types of preparation they listed included: 1) reading books or magazine articles (about the United States, homestay, and so on), 2) listening to radio or television English conversation programs, 3) watching foreign television programs or movies, 4) listening to English tapes, 5) attending conversation classes, and 6) watching television news in English. Only one student responded that she did not do any preparation outside of the orientation class.

The Mary Baldwin College Program

Classes

The students are at Mary Baldwin College three weeks, during which time they take American culture classes (in 1992, American children's culture, religions in America, and American history) and English language classes (reading, writing and speaking/listening). The culture classes emphasize student participation and discussion rather than lecture. Among other assignments, students did a short independent study project for the culture classes, made journal entries in class for the composition class, interviewed local businesspeople and college employees for the listening/speaking class, and wrote a report on that experience for their composition class. Fables, myths, and poems written by students for the composition class were gathered in a book that the students were given at the end of the course.

Students found the classes interesting and enjoyable. One student wrote, "We have our first class yesterday. I felt that an hour was very short, because every class was interesting for me." Another student wrote, "In Japan, most classes which I have in college are passive classes except for English classes. I only write down what a teacher writes on blackboard, but in America, I can speak in class, so I can feel that I am taking part in class."

Living Situation

During the time they were at MBC, students lived in a dormitory. They were divided into four groups, and there was a counselor, an American college student or recent graduate, assigned to each group. Students ate meals with their counselors and spent time with them outside of class. Though there were other Japanese students on campus at the same time, the Doshisha students had little contact with them.

Field Trips

In addition to classes, there were a number of field trips. Students visited a local organ factory, Richmond (including an art museum and a history museum), Williamsburg, Jamestown, Woodrow Wilson's Birthplace, a local dairy farm and poultry farm, Monticello, and the Museum of American Frontier Culture (where they could see farms from the 18th-century United States and three European countries), and attended Jazz in the Park and the Oak Grove Music Festival.

Homestay

After three weeks at MBC, students had a homestay experience with local families. Students were assigned to homestay families in pairs. They first met their families at a dinner and then spent four and a half days with them. With the homestay families, students engaged in a wide variety of activities, including camping, hiking, swimming, horseback riding, visiting museums, attending church services and other church activities, and visiting the host families' relatives or neighbors.

Entries in the students' journals indicated that the homestay experience was a universally positive one, and that all of the students formed good relationships with their host families and felt that, as a result of the experience, they learned a great deal about American daily life, particularly family life. One student wrote of the experience, "Though I stayed with them for only five days, it was the most wonderful time for me. They were very sweet and treated us as treasures. I could touch American daily life directly. I discovered many things." Another wrote, "They were all very kind and treated us as members of their family. I was very glad to stay with them a week. I won't forget them."

Japan Night

Students presented a "Japan Night" for their host families and the staff of the program. At Japan Night, students demonstrated aspects of Japanese culture, including teaching *origami*, doing a *kamishibai*, and letting the audience sample Japanese food. The audience reaction was positive, and the students' journal entries indicated that they felt that Japan Night had been very successful.

Overseas Orientation Surveys

The Questionnaires

As part of the course requirements, students filled out two surveys, one during the first week of the classes and one after returning from the United States. (The questions discussed in this paper appear in the appendix.) The main purposes of these questionnaire were exploring:

1. how students perceived the improvement of their English proficiency during the program
2. how students' images of the United States changed during the program
3. what types of preparation students perceived as being useful

In addition, information was gathered about how students prepared for going to the United States, why they applied for the program, what advice they had for preparation of future students in this program, and what cities they most enjoyed visiting.

Results of the Questionnaire

Reasons for joining the program. When asked for their reasons for wanting to enter the MBC program, students answers included a desire to: 1) speak to foreigners, 2) learn English (abroad) or improve English proficiency, 3) participate in a homestay program, 4) communicate/exchange views with Americans, 5) experience American education, 6) prepare for future study at an American university, 7) teach Americans about Japan, 8) learn about American culture and life, 9) see how Americans live, 10) expand their world, and 11) learn American pronunciation. The most frequently mentioned reason was desire to participate in the homestay program.

Students' perceptions of their preparation. Students were asked on the questionnaire which types of preparation they had found most and least useful (see Appendix). The students' responses indicated that learning about functions (*Communicating with Americans*) was the most useful. Seventeen students responded that it was the most useful type of preparation. Learning about traveling and using English (*Travel English*) was listed by ten students. Presentations by other students (5 students) and learning about American culture (*Background to the USA*) (2 students) were also mentioned. As for the least useful preparation, *Background to the USA* was perceived as being the least useful. It was mentioned by the largest number of students (15). Presentations were mentioned by eight students. *Travel Expressions* (4 students) and *Communicating with Americans* (1 student) were also mentioned. Five students specified that they did not consider any of the types of preparation "least useful."

Many of the students clearly felt that learning about functions in English was useful to them during their time in the United States. Learning about the situations they would be in as travelers was also considered beneficial. Probably these were considered useful because they were very specific and concrete, so students could clearly see their usefulness.

Learning specific expressions for travel situations (*Travel English*) was not considered the most useful preparation by any student and five students considered it the least useful preparation. However, because little emphasis was placed on this (there was no specific homework, other than to read the expressions, and they were only used in role plays at the end of the course), students may not have spent sufficient time on this type of preparation to benefit from it.

Learning about American culture, at least from *Background to the USA*, was not perceived as being particularly helpful. However, it is well known that a knowledge of culture is necessary to effective communication (Kitao, 1977), and that background knowledge influences comprehension (Anderson, 1978; Kitao, 1989). For example, one student mentioned that she wished she had known more about American government, since her host mother talked about it, and a few other students mentioned that it would have been helpful to know more about various aspects of American culture, including daily life. It may be that because the students can see a direct use for functions or explanations of situations they will be in as travelers, they can easily recognize the usefulness of such information.

However, many of the students may not have been as aware of the usefulness of background knowledge in communicating with English speakers. Since this type of preparation is not as concrete or obviously useful as learning about functions or situations, students may not have been aware of its usefulness.

Increase in students' English proficiency. In the questionnaire, students were asked to rate their English proficiency on a scale of zero to ten when they began the program in May and again after they returned from the United States. Before the program, the mean rating of their proficiency was 3.56, with a standard deviation of 1.16. After the program, the mean was 5.74, with a standard deviation of 0.93. I did a one-tailed t test comparing the two values, which indicated that the increase was significant ($t = -10.73$; $p < .05$).

Clearly, the students perceived that their English had improved noticeably. It is unlikely, however, that in three weeks of classes and two weeks of travel and homestay they learned a great deal more about English grammar or vocabulary. It is more likely that what actually improved was their ability to make use of the knowledge of English that they already have.

In addition to asking the students to rate their proficiency, I interviewed the five counselors about their qualitative perceptions of the increase in the students' English proficiency. This interview was conducted ten days after the students arrived at MBC. The counselors were all able to see clear improvements in the students' English proficiency. Specifically, they said that they had gone from speaking in one- to two-word utterances to full sentences. Students' comprehension also improved, according to the counselors in that the students were capable of understanding English spoken at a nearly natural speed, compared to the time when the students arrived, when the counselors felt it necessary to slow their rate of speaking considerably. The counselors felt that the relaxed atmosphere of the program was conducive to building confidence.

In addition to gaining confidence in their English, many of the students seemed to have gained more motivation to further improve their English. Many of them commented in their journals that when they returned to Japan, they wanted to work on their English proficiency so that they can communicate better when they return to the United States.

Students' advice for future programs. The students were also asked about their advice for the directors of future programs and what they wished they had known before going to the United States. No single suggestion was made by more than four students, and most suggestions were made by only one student.

Suggestions for the preparation before going to the United States included: learning more about American culture, including lifestyle, customs, and history (particularly related to places students visited, perhaps in Japanese); learning more about MBC (for example, how many students are there, what majors are offered, etc.); more opportunity to speak to foreigners before going to the United States; more study of English language, particularly conversation, vocabulary, and pronunciation; and more emphasis on explaining Japanese culture in English.

Suggestions for the portion of the program at MBC included more free time for rest, class preparation, or writing in journals; more time for preparation for Japan Night; a longer time spent in classes, perhaps after homestay; more counselors, perhaps one counselor per three to four students, because students speak English most with counselors; and more opportunity to talk with teachers and other Americans.

Students were also asked about their favorite and least favorite city. Of the cities the students visited after leaving MBC, New York and Los Angeles were the most popular, though all of the cities were mentioned as a favorite by at least one student. Most of the students said that there was no city that they did not enjoy visiting. A few students, however, mentioned that the schedule was difficult.

Changes in Students' Image of the United States

In order to assess changes in the students' images of the United States and Americans during the orientation and their time abroad, students were asked to list five positive and five negative adjectives describing the United States on the pretest and posttest. This method has both advantages and disadvantages in comparison to the method used by Yashima and Viswat (1991), Nozaki (1987), and others, in which participants rated their host country on a semantic differential, using adjective pairs such as friendly/unfriendly, kind/unkind, and dependent/independent. While this method provides clear and easily quantifiable results, the results are in terms of what the researcher, not the participant, considers most important. Asking students to provide their own adjectives makes the results more difficult to analyze, but it does provide more access to what is uppermost in the minds of the participants themselves. In addition, this instrument was more sensitive to some qualitative rather than quantitative changes. The students' image of the United States as a dangerous country before and after the trip, described below, would be an example of this advantage of this instrument.

Students responded with one to five adjectives (or frequently nouns or phrases) for the positive and negative lists. One student on the posttest did not provide any negative response.

Positive images. The most common adjective used to describe Americans or the United States was "friendly," and this was an image that became stronger during the period of the study. Seventeen of the students described Americans as "friendly" in the posttest, up from seven on the pretest. Related adjectives were "kind," which appeared on 14 posttests but only three pretests; "large- or big-hearted" (three each on the pretest and posttest); "generous" (twice in the posttest and once in the pretest); and "gentle" (once on the posttest). Three students on the posttest, but none on the pretest, noticed politeness to women. Americans were also described as being active (five on the pretest and five on the posttest) and cheerful (eight on the pretest and eight on the posttest) and people who express their opinions openly (3 students in the posttest and one in the pretest). Some students perceived Americans' lifestyle as being leisurely (three students in the posttest), though this was sometimes perceived as being negative in that clerks were slow (four students in the posttest).

As for the country itself, the image of the United States as being large seems to be the strongest image, both on the pretest (19 students) and posttest (26 students). It was also described as beautiful (4 students in the posttest) and with a lot of greenery and natural scenery, even in cities (4 students on the posttest).

Negative images. In the pretest, students' negative images of the United States were largely related to broad social problems. These were listed less often in the posttest. For example, the social problems that were listed included racial discrimination (13 in the pretest and 1 in the posttest), crime and violence (8 in the pretest and 4 in the posttest), and AIDS (3 in the pretest and 1 in the posttest).

The reduction in the number of students who listed racial discrimination as a factor in their negative image of the United States was particularly noticeable. Though students had apparently heard about discrimination through the media before going to the United States, and some expressed concern about "Japan bashing," they experienced little or none of it themselves, so this image changed.

Students saw the United States as dangerous both before and after the program (13 in the pretest and 15 in the posttest). Interestingly, however, the adjective "dangerous" was never qualified in the pretest, but in the posttest, it was usually qualified by such phrases as, "in some places," "mainly New York," and "large cities." Students appear to have learned that different places in the United States vary in how dangerous they are. In her journal, one student wrote, "I came to like America after this program. I changed my thought about America. Before I visited America I thought that America was only dangerous, but it is not true. Some places are dangerous, but there are a lot of nice places. And people were very kind and friendly."

How students felt their images had changed. The students were also asked directly how their image of the United States had changed as a result of the time they spent there. The replies of all the students indicated that their images were more positive than or the same as they were before the trip. None of the students indicated that their image was more negative. Thirteen of the students indicated that the United States was safer or less dangerous then they had expected. Four of the students indicated that they felt "closer" to the United States or Americans than they had before the trip.

Most of the students, either in this questionnaire or in conversation with me, their teachers or their counselors, expressed interest in returning to the United States, possibly even to live or study. Three of the students indicated that they had not been particularly interested in the United States before this trip, but now they were very interested in it. (One of them wrote, "At first I wanted to go to England, but I think I'm lucky girl, I couldn't go to England. My favorite country is America.") Clearly, the image of the students was more positive than it had been before the trip.

Conclusion

The students obviously felt that they had benefited from their experience of studying overseas. They felt that they had been broadened by the experience. As one student wrote (after having commented that she had gained weight in the United States), "I may be overweight, but I not only my body grew but also my heart. I never forget my American life." Another wrote, "I could know American idea, American history and American culture, and we could tell Japanese history and culture in return. I could feel close to America. I love America and I want to visit America again."

Another student felt that the experience had had an especially profound effect on her. She wrote after the time at Mary Baldwin College, "In this three weeks I found my mind changed. I found there was nothing I can't do. I want to challenge everything without fearing. I'm sure if I hold out, my dream will come true." Another student wrote, "Through this trip, I feel I grew up. . . . I learned many things. Probably I come to be able to speak English better than before I went to America. . . . I'll never forget this trip." They perceived that their English had improved, they had more motivation to study English, their image of the United States and of Americans was more positive, and they had more confidence in themselves.

Future studies of these topics would be worthwhile. For example, more in-depth studies of what students found useful and, perhaps more important, why they found it useful, would help in the future preparation of students for overseas study. (Studying what students found useful might be more effectively done with a Likert scale or a semantic differential.) In addition, studies on the lasting effects of the experience and how much changes in students' attitudes toward and images of the host country persist would be valuable.

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Appendix

Overseas Orientation Survey (May 1992)

Answer the following questions. If you have difficulty answering in English, please answer in Japanese.

Name: Age: Years Months

1. Have you ever been to the United States? If so, how long were you there? What did you do while you were there?

2. Have you ever been to any other foreign country? If so, how long were you there? What did you do while you were there?

4. Rate your English proficiency on a scale of 0-10. (10 means as proficient as a native English speaker; 0 means no ability at all.) Circle the number.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. What is your image of the United States, both negative and positive? Write five positive (good) adjectives and five negative (bad) adjectives. Briefly explain with what you mean by each.

   Positive:

   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.

   Negative:

   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.

Overseas Orientation Survey (October 1992)

Answer the following questions. If you have difficulty answering in English, please answer in Japanese.

Name:

1. In addition to attending the overseas orientation class, how did you prepare for the trip to the United States? (for example, radio or TV English conversation programs; conversation classes; reading books)?
2. Rate your English proficiency after the trip on a scale of 0-10. (10 means as proficient as a native English speaker; 0 means no ability at all.) Circle the number.

   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. What is your image of the United States, both negative and positive? Write five positive (good) adjectives and five negative (bad) adjectives. Briefly explain with what you mean by each.

   Positive:

   1.
   2.
   3.
   4.
   5.

Negative:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

4. How did your image of the United States change as a result of your time there?
5. What was your image of American families before your homestay? How did your image of American families change as a result of your homestay?
6. In this class you prepared for the trip to the United States in various ways.
   1) learning about functions (requests, greetings, etc.) — *Communicating with Americans*
   2) learning about American culture — *Background to the USA*
   3) learning about traveling and using English — *Travel English* (handouts)
   4) presentations — about traveling, American culture and the places that we would visit
   5) learning about English expressions — *Travel Expressions*
   6) Other (please specify)

Which did you find most useful (write in the number)?

Which did you find least useful (write in the number)?

7. What advice would you give to next year's director for the MBC program? What kinds of preparation did you find especially useful? What kinds did not help? What did you wish you had known?
8. Which city did you enjoy visiting most? Which city did you not enjoy visiting?

Reading and Schema Theory: A Bibliography

Although schema theory is generally attributed to Bartlett (1932), it is only in recent years that there has been widespread interest in it, particularly as it relates to reading. Schemata can be defined as highly organized generic knowledge structures composed of "slots" or "placeholders" for each component (den Uyl & van Oostemdorp, 1980). A schema includes information about constraints on what can be used to fill a particular slot (Anderson, 1978), relationships among the slots (Graesser, Woll, Kowalski, & Smith, 1980), and a web of relationships with other schemata (Pearson & Spiro, 1982).

In this bibliography, I have included citations for references related to both textual schemata and content schemata, especially as they relate to the reading process. There are, in addition, a number of other theories (e.g., script theory) and fields of research (e.g., context effects) which are related to schema theory and which are useful for anyone interested in schema theory. I have included citations for references related to these areas.

If the reader is not familiar with schema theory, there are a number of articles with good explanations of schema theory and how it is applied. These include Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, and Goetz (1977); Anderson (1978); Graesser, Woll, Kowalski, and Smith (1980); and Pearson and Spiro (1982). Abelson (1981), Schank and Abelson (1977), and den Uyl and van Oostemdorp (1980) have good explanations of script theory.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

S. KATHLEEN KITAO received her MA and PhD in communication from Michigan State University. She is an assistant professor at Doshisha Women's College and has taught oral English, reading, functional English, and composition at several Kansai-area universities. She is author of *Reading, Schema Theory and Second Language Learners* and co-author of *Intercultural Communication: Between Japan and the United States*, a collection of papers, as well as more than thirty English textbooks. These include Addison-Wesley's American Reading Series (*An American Sampler, American Patterns*, and *American Vistas*), *American Portrait, From Paragraphs to Essays, American Holidays, American Mosaic, Communicating with Americans: Functions in English, Communicating in the U.S.: Situations in English, Understanding English Newspapers, Traveling and Living in the U.S.: Using Authentic English*, and *Developing Reading Strategies*. She has made presentations at conferences and published papers in Japan, the US, Britain, Finland, Singapore, South Africa, and Korea. Her interests include materials development, teaching rhetorical patterns in English composition classes, and reading strategies, schema theory, and other topics in intercultural communication.

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